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NAVAL POSTGRADUATE SCHOOL

MONTEREY, CALIFORNIA

THESIS

**VICTORY IN THE GREY ZONE: RUSSIAN MASS
PERSUASION AND THE NATO RESPONSE**

by

John B. Greene

March 2020

Thesis Advisor:
Second Reader:

Donald Abenheim
Mikhail Tsyarkin

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**VICTORY IN THE GREY ZONE: RUSSIAN MASS PERSUASION AND THE
NATO RESPONSE**

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Lieutenant, United States Navy
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Submitted in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of

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ABSTRACT

This thesis poses the question of how NATO can prevail against Russian propaganda that aims to undermine the alliance that has defended Europe for nearly 75 years. Particular attention is devoted to the visual element of propaganda found in posters, photomontages, drawings, and film used by the Soviet Union during the Cold War in its campaign against NATO, and more recently by the Russian Federation in its multi-faceted assault on the hearts and minds of Europe. The thesis analyzes these phenomena in the context of studies by scholars Jo Fox and Peter Paret on how conflict has been portrayed in art and film. The thesis argues that Russian propaganda has its antecedents in the Soviet campaign and that NATO has countered Russian propaganda. The thesis compares NATO's response to Soviet propaganda during the Cold War to NATO's more recent efforts to counter Russian propaganda, notably the establishment of the Strategic Communications Centre of Excellence. Case studies examine the use of propaganda and public information by both Russia and NATO relating to Zapad 2017 and Trident Juncture 2018. The thesis concludes with recommendations on ways in which NATO can prevail in this critical battle for influence and enhance its effectiveness.

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LIST OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

APC	Armored Personnel Carrier
APN	Agentstvo Pechati Novosti
CICR	Committee on Information and Cultural Relations
CPD	Committee on Public Diplomacy
CPSU	Communist Party of the Soviet Union
eFP	Enhanced Forward Presence
ERP	European Recovery Program
EU	European Union
FRG	Federal Republic of Germany
FSB	Federal Security Service of the Russian Federation
GDR	German Democratic Republic
ID	International Department
IID	International Information Department
IRBM	Intermediate Range Ballistic Missile
KGB	Komitet Gosudarstvennoy Bezopasnosti
LST	Landing Ship Tank
MIC	Mobile Information Center
NAC	North Atlantic Council
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NATIS	NATO Information Service
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
OIP	Office of Information and Press
ORT	Obshchestvennoye Rossiyskoye Televideniye
OSCE	Organization for Security Co-operation in Europe
PDD	Public Diplomacy Division
RAND	Research and Development Corporation
ROSTA	Russian Telegraph Agency
RPP	Radio Peace and Progress
SNMCMG2	Standing NATO Mine Countermeasures Group Two
SS	Schutzstaffel

TASS	Telegraph Agency of the Soviet Union
UK	United Kingdom
UN	United Nations
U.S.	United States
USIA	United States Information Agency
USSR	Union of Soviet Socialist Republics
WPC	World Peace Council

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I. INTRODUCTION

A. MAJOR RESEARCH QUESTION

The world of 2020 lives in awe of the terms hybrid war and great power competition. Much hyperbole and little sound analysis adheres to these terms. This study works on aspects of these terms, especially in the case of Eastern Europe and the categories of Clausewitz's theory that deal with politics and psychology as facets of the nature of war and the attempt to give it some coherence.

In particular, since the Russian annexation of Crimea in 2014, Russia has used a combination of coercive diplomacy, nationalism, limited military force and, above all, an all-horizons campaign of propaganda in various media. This strategy has targeted not just Ukraine, the ex-USSR republic under the eye of Putin's Eurasian revanchism, but also targeted North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) allies and partner states in order to disrupt, sow discord, and undermine trust in NATO. For the U.S. Navy and other forces participating in NATO exercises, Russia's use of propaganda is a form of aggression presenting a challenge that defies normal categories of naval tactics and operations. This phenomenon cries out for analysis, which is the goal of this study. The contemporary naval officer on service under the barrage of this offensive has to be able to recognize Russian strategic and operational coercion and subterfuge when it arises, but more so, it is the response by those enjoined to defend the North Atlantic alliance and beyond to this Russian propaganda that matters.

Such comprehension as a guide to policy, strategy, and operations is central to deterrence and possible victory in various levels of warfare of the non-shooting and shooting kind across the spectrum of conflict. This study takes this startling effort as its focus and, in turn, seeks to answer how has NATO public information and efforts at mass persuasion countered Russian propaganda and psychological operations in what is described as hybrid war? In addition, how has the answer to Russian aggression bolstered the Alliance, and supported NATO's strategy to deter Russian revanchism? Lastly, the thesis seeks to discover what generalizations are possible for the making of strategy for

crisis and operations short of conflict in the realm of propaganda and to offer suggestions for application in policy and operations.

B. SIGNIFICANCE OF THE RESEARCH QUESTION

The use and importance of propaganda to influence opponents and allies before, during, and after war is an old theme of war and psychology that a new generation is compelled to rediscover amid shock at Russian deftness in this realm. As French philosopher Jacques Ellul said, “Before the war, propaganda is a substitute for physical violence; during the war, it is a supplement to it.”¹ As scholar Jo Fox notes, “propaganda was inescapable for the modern state.”² From the rise of the modern political era in the wars of religion in Europe and the French Revolution, the role of mass persuasion became an element of Russian statecraft in the attempt by Russia to influence the fate of Europe in the realm of ideas and opinion. This process was especially present in Metternich’s Europe and the Congress system.³ During World War One and World War Two, all the belligerents utilized various forms of propaganda to mobilize their populations and influence enemies and neutrals. Fox writes that the concept of Total War, that is, a war of society and economy over and above a navy at sea or an army in the field, introduced in World War One and repeated in World War Two and the Cold War, necessitated mass psychological mobilization in order to convince populations of the “necessity of the fight and the endurance required to win it.”⁴ While nuclear weapons did or did not deter actual combat in the epoch 1945–1991, propaganda on a global front and forms of violence at a low to intermediate level were a central battlefield in the Soviet–U.S. antagonism. The Soviet Union, the United States, and their allies continued the use of propaganda in order to keep their populations motivated throughout the long struggle of the Cold War. In the 21st

¹ Garth Jowett and Victoria O’Donnell, *Propaganda & Persuasion*, 7th ed. (Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE, 2019), loc. 478 of 16608, Kindle.

² Jo Fox, *Film Propaganda in Britain and Nazi Germany: World War II Cinema* (Oxford: Berg, 2007), 316.

³ Adam Zamoyski, *Phantom Terror: Political Paranoia and the Creation of the Modern State, 1789–1848* (New York: Basic Books, 2015).

⁴ Fox, *Film Propaganda*, 27.

century, the invention and widespread adoption of digital communication technologies on a staggering scale affords the capability to reach far greater numbers of individuals and with far greater ease than in the past. This provides new challenges and opportunities in efforts to influence and mobilize individuals and populations. Russia has been quick to seize upon this.

Since, as Dr. Dimitar Bechev notes, Russia is not in a position to roll back NATO or the European Union (EU) solely by force of arms, the regime in Moscow turns to propaganda among other soft power tools to confront them.⁵ The more or less bloodless 2014 invasion of Crimea by Russian forces shocked NATO and since then, NATO has found itself the target of an increasing Russian strategic disinformation campaign.⁶ Given Russia's reliance on soft power and its increasing use of propaganda against NATO, it is vital to understand how NATO has countered Russian propaganda. In addition, it is critical to determine if NATO mass persuasion efforts have bolstered the alliance. NATO provides protection for 30 countries and hundreds of millions their citizens. Yet it exists because of the will and consent of the people it protects. Thus, the support of the populace is vital for its future existence.

C. LITERATURE REVIEW

1. Propaganda: Fata Morgana and Fact in the Grey Zone

This literature review examines and seeks to define propaganda in modern warfare and geopolitics, with a nod to social media and the 21st century. Then it looks to ascertain the goals of Russian propaganda operations as well as the threat they pose to NATO allies. In brief, it discusses the tactics as well as some examples of Russian propaganda targeting NATO countries. In order to counter these operations, one must understand the continuity between Soviet and Russian propaganda from the early 20th century until the present, because this continuity is manifest. Lastly, the focus will turn to NATO, its efforts post-

⁵ Dimitar Bechev, *Rival Power: Russia's Influence in Southeast Europe* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2017), loc. 4031 of 6864, Kindle.

⁶ Foo Yun Chee, "NATO Says It Sees Sharp Rise in Russian Disinformation since Crimea," Reuters, February 11, 2017, <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-ukraine-crisis-russia-media-idUSKBN15Q0MG>.

2014 to counter Russian propaganda, as well as what can be learned from NATO Cold War information efforts as these do or do not pertain to the present.

In order to determine how NATO has countered Russian propaganda and bolstered the alliance it is first necessary to define propaganda as well as related terms. The thing we describe as propaganda has existed for thousands of years in various forms, yet democracies have often misunderstood this phenomenon and generally have viewed it in a negative context.⁷ As will be discussed, propaganda can be defined clearly, and certain key characteristics identified as well as requirements for success noted. Only by understanding what propaganda is and is not can one properly evaluate it and whether the countermeasures deployed against propaganda are proper and effective.

Propaganda is an enduring phenomenon of organized violence and the political world in general; it can be traced back to the earliest records of civilization.⁸ Yet, the actual origin of the word can be found in the Reformation and the Counter-Reformation,⁹ and over the following centuries its usage has developed into the context with which many individuals associate it today. As scholar David Welch notes, in the 16th century, the Roman Catholic Church found itself challenged by the rise of Protestantism. A commission of cardinals was created to spread the message and teachings of the Church to defeat heretics and reestablish the church in the lands where it had lost ground. In the early part of the 17th century, Pope Gregory XV made this a permanent commission with the title *Sacra Congregatio de Propaganda Fide*. A few years later this became the College of Propaganda where new priests were trained before being dispatched on missions.¹⁰ As Europe became a place of nation states, mass persuasion migrated from the first estate to the middle and

⁷ J. Michael Sproule, *Propaganda and Democracy: The American Experience of Media and Mass Persuasion*, 1st Paperback ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 269–71.

⁸ Philip M. Taylor, *Munitions of the Mind: A History of Propaganda*, 3rd ed. (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2003), 24.

⁹ Peter Guilday, “The Sacred Congregation de Propaganda Fide (1622–1922),” *The Catholic Historical Review* 6, no. 4 (January 1921): 478.

¹⁰ Nicholas John Cull, David Holbrook Culbert, and David Welch, *Propaganda and Mass Persuasion: A Historical Encyclopedia, 1500 to the Present* (Santa Barbara: ABC-CLIO, 2003), XVI.

working classes. The advent of total war in the 20th century and the emergence of mass communication technologies caused the belligerents in World War One to adopt systemic propaganda strategies. As Taylor, Welch, and Miller discuss it was the false atrocity propaganda of World War One followed by the Nazi adoption in the 1920s and perversion of the British 1914–1918 propaganda model that gave propaganda the negative connotation that has existed since.¹¹ The use of propaganda in both world wars illustrated the power of propaganda to mobilize populations for total war and to help sustain the fight until unconditional victory. The lessons learned were applied by the Soviet Union, the United States, and NATO throughout the Cold War.¹²

Propaganda is not easy to define. Its root lies in the Latin word *propago* meaning “to extend” or “to increase.”¹³ As a term of politics, society, and culture its first use, as noted, is associated with the Catholic Church’s attempt to defeat Protestantism and reestablish the unity of the Church. Yet, as Welch shows, the meaning of the word has changed over time and since the latter half of the 20th century has generally had a negative connotation of totalitarianism especially in democratic societies.¹⁴ This meaning and the desire to avoid it is evidenced by the British World War Two propaganda agency being named the Ministry of Information or the U.S. propaganda arm during the Cold War being called the United States Information Agency. Welch defines propaganda as the “deliberate attempt to influence the opinions of an audience through the transmission of ideas and values for the specific purpose, consciously designed to serve the interests of the

¹¹ Taylor, *Munitions of the Mind*, 3; Cull, Culbert, and Welch, *Propaganda and Mass Persuasion*, XVII; Edward L. Bernays, *Propaganda* (New York: H. Liveright, 1928), Reprinted with an introduction by Mark Crispin Miller, (Brooklyn, NY: Ig Publishing, 2005), 11–12, 14.

¹² Kenneth Alan Osgood, *Total Cold War: Eisenhower’s Secret Propaganda Battle at Home and Abroad* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2006), 32–33.

¹³ Jowett and O’Donnell, *Propaganda & Persuasion*, loc. 431 of 16608, Kindle; *Harpers’ Latin Dictionary: A New Latin Dictionary Founded on the Translation of Freund’s Latin-German Lexicon*, s.v. “Propago,” <https://www.latinitium.com/latin-dictionaries>.

¹⁴ Cull, Culbert, and Welch, *Propaganda and Mass Persuasion*, 317–23.

propagandists and their political masters, either directly or indirectly.”¹⁵ Earlier definitions use criteria such as whether the communication of the idea was successful or the sponsor hidden to determine whether something is propaganda. For example, Edward Bernays, who had an integral role at the U.S. Committee on Public Information in the pivotal period 1917–1918, defined propaganda as “the conscious and intelligent manipulation of the masses” and to do so the sponsor was hidden while taking actions that generated news and thus influence.¹⁶ Professors Jowett and O’Donnell provide a definition similar to Welch’s: “propaganda is the deliberate, systematic attempt to shape perceptions, manipulate cognitions, and direct behavior to achieve a response that furthers the desired intent of the propagandist.”¹⁷ This is the definition that will be used in this thesis.

What is not propaganda is obvious in some ways and less so in others. Propaganda is not random or disorganized communication of ideas or values. Nor is it simply advertising for a commercial product, though advertising and propaganda share similarities in place, time, and personalities, i.e., modern propaganda is an offshoot of commercial society of the second industrial revolution as we know it, if not earlier. Two categories that are commonly confused with propaganda are: public information and mass persuasion. They are distinct and satisfy different purposes. As Jowett and O’Donnell argue, the purpose of information is to “promote mutual understanding” for both sender and receiver while persuasion seeks to “promote mutual fulfillment of needs” for both parties. This is in contrast to propaganda, that while combining elements of information and persuasion, seeks to benefit the sender and not necessarily the receiver.¹⁸

There are a number of key characteristics of propaganda that can be used to identify it. Knowledge and usage of these characteristics by the propagandist can increase the chances of success and conversely help the counterpropagandist in identifying and parrying the messaging. Visual propaganda (film, photographs, paintings, cartoons, etc.) can simply

¹⁵ Cull, Culbert, and Welch, 322.

¹⁶ Osgood, *Total Cold War*, 20.

¹⁷ Jowett and O’Donnell, *Propaganda & Persuasion*, loc. 576 of 16608, Kindle.

¹⁸ Jowett and O’Donnell, loc. 1249 of 16608, Kindle.

convey multiple themes and messages via political and cultural symbols that can evoke an emotional and visceral response in an audience. Scholar Peter Paret recognizes the importance of visual art in conveying themes related to war and conflict. He writes:

what art conveys best, and sometimes uniquely, has less to do with the mechanics of war...than with the feelings about war of individuals and societies, with their attitudes toward the enemy and their own armed forces, and with the ways they connect war to other major elements in their lives—economic activity, social and political authority, beliefs, personal relationships.¹⁹

Ellul argues that the propaganda must be systematically organized, continuous, and use all available means to convey it.²⁰ Ellul, Jowett, and O'Donnell note that including elements of the truth as well as targeting emotions of the intended recipient increases the chance of success. For Ellul, knowledge of the intended audience and thus tailoring the message is one of the most important aspects.²¹

2. Implications for NATO Members and Partner States

A review of the literature reveals that there is a consensus among the trinity of the people, the government, and the military that Russia is targeting the populations of NATO countries with propaganda in order to further its goals. Norwegian military officer and scholar Geir Hågen Karlsen writes that the long-term goal of Russian propaganda and influence operations directed at European countries is to “weaken NATO and the EU” while in the short-term seeking to undermine support for U.S. and EU sanctions against Russia following the 2014 Ukraine invasion.²² Bechev takes a wider view writing that

¹⁹ Peter Paret, *Imagined Battles: Reflections of War in European Art* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1997), 7–10.

²⁰ Jacques Ellul, “The Characteristics of Propaganda,” in *Readings in Propaganda and Persuasion: New and Classic Essays*, ed. Garth S. Jowett and Victoria O'Donnell (Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications, 2006), 6, 11, 13.

²¹ Ellul, 19–23.

²² Geir Hågen Karlsen, “Divide and Rule: Ten Lessons about Russian Political Influence Activities in Europe,” *Palgrave Communications* 5, no. 1 (December 2019): 1, 5, <https://doi.org/10.1057/s41599-019-0227-8>.

Russia seeks “to balance NATO militarily...and, to some extent, dilute EU enlargement.”²³ Bobo Lo, a scholar and former diplomat, writes that Russia has sought to counter the United States, undermine NATO, and drive a wedge between former Soviet states and the West.²⁴ Scholars Martin Kragh and Sebastian Åsberg find that Russian propaganda contributes to its strategic goal “to minimize or remove NATO presence in the country’s ‘near abroad’.”²⁵ There does appear to be debate regarding the seriousness of the threat to NATO posed by the Russian propaganda campaign, as a fraction of the public in such nations as Germany, Britain, and the U.S. deny that there is any undue Russian influence of any kind—indirect or direct—and, in fact, that Russia would be a superb ally as in the period 1941–1945. Bechev writes that while the threat is more serious to the Baltic states it is substantially less to states in Southeastern Europe.²⁶ Karlsen in his study concludes that the threat posed by Russia propaganda is not serious, yet admits that a number of reports from Baltic countries assess the threat quite differently.²⁷ Kragh and Åsberg argue that it is not possible to determine the effectiveness and thus the threat of Russian propaganda. Yet, they write it is still critical to study and counter Russian propaganda. This is because the considerable effort Russia commits to these operations indicates the importance Russia places on its goals of undermining the West.²⁸

Russia uses multiple methods in its propaganda operations. In the literature, there is general consensus on how Russia broadly carries out its operations. Karlsen writes that Russia focuses on exploiting divisions at three levels: the European or NATO and EU level,

²³ Bechev, *Rival Power*, loc. 3141 of 6864, Kindle.

²⁴ Bobo Lo, *Russia and the New World Disorder* (London: Chatham House, 2015), 210.

²⁵ Martin Kragh and Sebastian Åsberg, “Russia’s Strategy for Influence Through Public Diplomacy and Active Measures: The Swedish Case,” *Journal of Strategic Studies* 40, no. 6 (2017): 806, <https://doi.org/10.1080/01402390.2016.1273830>.

²⁶ Bechev, *Rival Power*, loc. 3297 of 6864, Kindle.

²⁷ Karlsen, “Divide and Rule,” 11.

²⁸ Kragh and Åsberg, “Russia’s Strategy for Influence,” 775.

interstate, and intrastate.²⁹ This allows Russia to tailor the message that will be most receptive to a particular party.³⁰ Research and Development (RAND) Corporation scientists Christopher Paul and Miriam Matthews argue that Russian propaganda has the following qualities: “high-volume and multichannel; rapid, continuous, and repetitive; lacks commitment to objective reality; lacks commitment to consistency.”³¹ Similarly, the Atlantic Council Digital Forensic Lab describes Russian propaganda as utilizing the “4Ds” or distort, dismiss, dismay, and distract.³² Analyst Monika Richter points out the Russian government’s promotion that objective, verifiable truth is impossible to obtain.³³ The constant messaging via multiple methods combined with disinformation seeks to cast doubt on the institutions, free press, and free elections of the West and thus divide and disrupt NATO. Russia attempts to reach target populations through the use of all manner of tools from traditional media to social media proxies to political parties.³⁴ Allen and Moore note the Russian usage of disinformation playing on emotions as well as historical animosities.³⁵ This is evidenced by two recent fake news events in Lithuania. In 2017, e-mails were sent to the Lithuanian parliament and media outlets claiming German soldiers

²⁹ Karlsen, “Divide and Rule,” 6.

³⁰ Christopher Paul et al., *Lessons from Others for Future U.S. Army Operations in and Through the Information Environment*, RR-1925/2-A (Santa Monica: RAND Corporation, 2018), 171–72, https://www.rand.org/pubs/research_reports/RR1925z2.html.

³¹ Christopher Paul and Miriam Matthews, *The Russian ‘Firehose of Falsehood’ Propaganda Model*, PE-198-OSD (Santa Monica: RAND Corporation, 2016), 2, <https://doi.org/10.7249/PE198>.

³² Donara Barojan and Michael Sheldon, “#MinskMonitor: Disinformation Tactics Extend to Kerch,” @DFRLab, last modified January 7, 2019, <https://medium.com/dfrlab/minskmonitor-disinformation-tactics-extend-to-kerch-c32351c7c293>.

³³ Monika L Richter, *What We Know about RT (Russia Today)*, (Prague: European Values Think-Tank, October 9, 2017), 10, <https://www.europeanvalues.net/wp-content/uploads/2017/09/What-We-Know-about-RT-Russia-Today-1.pdf>.

³⁴ Karlsen, “Divide and Rule,” 6, 9; Todd C. Helmus et al., *Russian Social Media Influence: Understanding Russian Propaganda in Eastern Europe*, RR-2237-OSD (Santa Monica: RAND Corporation, 2018), 1–2, <https://doi.org/10.7249/RR2237>.

³⁵ T. S. Allen and A. J. Moore, “Victory Without Casualties: Russia’s Information Operations,” *Parameters* 48, no. 1 (Spring 2018): 65–66.

in support of a NATO mission had raped an underage Lithuanian girl.³⁶ In 2018, a website mimicking Lithuania's top news site spread the fake story that a U.S. Army vehicle on a NATO exercise had run over and killed a boy on a bicycle.³⁷

Though the means of execution in the 21st century have changed, there is continuity with the Soviet active measures of the classical past from 1918 until the 1980s. The links between today's propaganda operations and those of the past are noted in the literature though there is some disagreement over how similar they are. Steve Abrams writes that Russian propaganda operations today are a continuation of policy that dates back to Soviet times if not to those phases when Russian policy and power reached deeply into Western Europe, especially in the epoch 1815–1852, when Russia was a central part of the Holy Alliance. He argues that “Russia has simply recycled and updated these age-old subversion techniques.”³⁸ Researcher Lesley Kucharski notes that Russia is using the Soviet practice of an “institutionalized system for coordinating and implementing...overt and covert, non-military and military information operations.”³⁹ However, Kucharski writes that postmodern forms of communication via the digital juggernaut as well as the increased influence of non-governmental organizations have led to modifications of the Soviet active measures strategy.⁴⁰ Allen and Moore note the similarity in the goal of Soviet and Russia

³⁶ “NATO: Russia Targeted German Army with Fake News Campaign,” Deutsche Welle, February 16, 2017, <https://www.dw.com/en/nato-russia-targeted-german-army-with-fake-news-campaign/a-37591978>.

³⁷ Andrius Sytas, “Lithuania Sees Fake News Attempt to Discredit NATO Exercises,” Reuters, June 13, 2018, <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-nato-russia-idUSKBN1J92FC>.

³⁸ Steve Abrams, “Beyond Propaganda: Soviet Active Measures in Putin's Russia,” *Connections: The Quarterly Journal* 15, no. 1 (2016): 18, <http://dx.doi.org/10.11610/Connections.15.1.01>.

³⁹ Lesley Kucharski, *Russian Multi-Domain Strategy Against NATO: Information Confrontation and U.S. Forward-Deployed Nuclear Weapons in Europe*, (Livermore, CA: The Center for Global Security Research, 2018), 7, https://cgsrc.llnl.gov/content/assets/docs/4Feb_IPb_against_NATO_nuclear_posture.pdf.

⁴⁰ Kucharski, 2–3.

propaganda operations: “divide the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) alliance.”⁴¹

Though literature exists on NATO public information and mass persuasion efforts since 2014 there is scant evaluation of its effectiveness.⁴² Most of the literature tends to either complement NATO’s efforts and recommend additional steps be taken or simply provides advice on what NATO and EU countries should do to combat Russian propaganda. Public diplomacy scholar Barbora Maronkova argues that NATO and its partners are pursuing the right course of action. They need only to continue showcasing “Western values, institutions, and beliefs” as the “best options for prosperity and peace.”⁴³ Researcher Eric Adamson writes that NATO has made progress in countering Russian disinformation, but “efforts remain fragmented and often underfunded.”⁴⁴ Scholars, Corneliu Bjola and James Pamment argue that NATO’s response should be “a strategy of digital containment based on the tenets of supporting media literacy and source criticism, encouraging institutional resilience, and promoting a clear and coherent strategic narrative.”⁴⁵ Professor Andrew Wolff argues that NATO has a public perception problem

⁴¹ Allen and Moore, “Victory Without Casualties,” 61.

⁴² Barbora Maronkova, “From Crawling to Walking: Progress in Evaluating the Effectiveness of Public Diplomacy: Lessons Learned from NATO,” CPD Perspectives (Los Angeles: University of Southern California, February 2018), 6–8, 20, https://www.uscpublicdiplomacy.org/sites/uscpublicdiplomacy.org/files/From%20Crawling%20to%20Walking_Maronkova.pdf.

⁴³ Barbora Maronkova, “Countering Russian Propaganda: NATO’s Role,” The Fletcher Forum of World Affairs, March 12, 2017, <http://www.fletcherforum.org/home/2017/3/12/countering-russian-propaganda-natos-role>.

⁴⁴ Eric Adamson, “Defending the Information Space: Russian Disinformation and Western Responses,” *European Student Think Tank* (blog), April 4, 2019, <http://www.esthinktank.com/2019/04/04/defending-the-information-space-russian-disinformation-and-western-responses/>.

⁴⁵ Corneliu Bjola and James Pamment, “Digital Containment: Revisiting Containment Strategy in the Digital Age,” *Global Affairs* 2, no. 2 (2016): 131, <https://doi.org/10.1080/23340460.2016.1182244>.

and “should consider adopting a long-term branding strategy.”⁴⁶ In 2014, in some ways answering these critiques, NATO established in Riga the NATO Strategic Communications Center of Excellence.⁴⁷ This is a key organization for NATO in combating Russian influence. It contributes to NATO public affairs as well as public diplomacy efforts. In 2017, NATO launched its first alliance-wide branding campaign in 10 years. The campaign, #WeAreNATO, seeks to build solidarity within NATO and to increase global understanding of what NATO does. It is a multimedia campaign that includes short videos showcasing individual NATO soldiers, sailors, marines, and airmen.⁴⁸ NATO also has an operation that publicly refutes disinformation about the Alliance.⁴⁹

An examination of NATO actions as well as those of national governments to counter Soviet propaganda during the Cold War can well perhaps provide lessons for today. A number of scholars advocate using the Cold War era strategies and tactics including the Active Measures Working Group as templates for today.⁵⁰ Author Seth Jones argues that it is time “to resurrect a modified version of its Cold War playbook and develop an

⁴⁶ Andrew T. Wolff, “Crafting a NATO Brand: Bolstering Internal Support for the Alliance through Image Management,” *Contemporary Security Policy* 35, no. 1 (2014): 73, <https://doi.org/10.1080/13523260.2014.885708>.

⁴⁷ “About Us,” NATO Strategic Communications Centre of Excellence, 2019, <https://www.stratcomcoe.org/about-us>.

⁴⁸ Hassan Butt, “NATO Launches Branded Communications Campaign #WeAreNato,” *Communicate*, June 12, 2017, <http://www.communicatemagazine.com/news/2017/nato-launches-branded-communications-campaign-wearenato/>; “#WEARENATO,” NATO, accessed May 13, 2019, <https://www.nato.int/wearenato/>.

⁴⁹ “NATO–Russia Relations: The Facts,” NATO, August 9, 2019, http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/topics_111767.htm.

⁵⁰ Nate Low, “Cold War Lessons for Countering Covert Action,” *New Perspectives in Foreign Policy*, no. 16 (Fall 2018): 29–33; John Fund, “Combating Russian Disinformation: Use Reagan’s Techniques,” *National Review*, November 13, 2017, <https://www.nationalreview.com/2017/11/russian-propaganda-tech-companies-facebook-twitter-google-should-follow-reagan-technique-counter-propaganda/>.

information campaign that can compete with Moscow.”⁵¹ Dr. Osgood offers insight into the extent of early Cold War propaganda efforts of the U.S. government to mobilize the U.S. population for the long struggle and to win the hearts and minds of the populations of neutrals and allies.⁵² Professor Linda Risso’s book provides a useful history of the NATO Information Service (NATIS) from its founding until the end of the Cold War. The book not only illuminates NATIS campaigns, but also the difficulties of mounting alliance-wide information operations and then measuring their impacts. Though new means of communications exist the challenges of coordinating across 30 countries and reaching target audiences are much the same.⁵³

D. POTENTIAL EXPLANATIONS AND HYPOTHESES

This thesis investigates the hypothesis that Russia’s anti-NATO propaganda activities are a continuation of the Soviet Union’s mass persuasion efforts. Confirming such a linkage could illuminate the way to counter Russian propaganda, which exploits ethnic and political divisions in Europe and portrays NATO as an aggressor. In brief, Soviet (and later Russian) propaganda was offensive and focused on attacking the U.S. and NATO. Since the propaganda threat was faced by NATO during the Cold War, the lessons drawn from this time can help evaluate today’s response or surely enable those on the front lines of great power conflict better to understand the essence and character of this so-called grey zone conflict which is often treated in an analytically sloppy manner.

In addition, this thesis investigates the hypothesis that since 2014 NATO public diplomacy and mass persuasion efforts have countered Russian propaganda and bolstered the alliance. NATO is not only responding to the spurious claims in Russian propaganda, but the themes and symbols present in NATO messaging embody the values of the

⁵¹ Seth G. Jones, “Going on the Offensive: A U.S. Strategy to Combat Russian Information Warfare,” CSIS Briefs (Washington, DC: Center for Strategic and International Studies, October 2018), 10, <https://www.csis.org/analysis/going-offensive-us-strategy-combat-russian-information-warfare>.

⁵² Osgood, *Total Cold War*.

⁵³ Linda Risso, *Propaganda and Intelligence in the Cold War: The NATO Information Service* (New York: Routledge, 2014), <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315871158>.

Alliance. Thus, NATO mass persuasion promotes NATO and the western, liberal ideals that it is founded on.

E. RESEARCH DESIGN

The research will have two main components: a comparative analysis of Russian and NATO propaganda and case studies examining military exercises. The first component will take a theoretical approach to analyze the function, meaning, and interplay of propaganda produced by both sides since 2014 along with the historical roots of the propaganda in the Cold War. It will also examine historical themes conveyed within the propaganda. Lastly, it will seek to glean what this propaganda tells one about the society that created it. The primary mediums examined will be images, photographs, and film/video. The two case studies will be divided between a recent Russian military exercise and a NATO one. Through the comparative analysis of propaganda and review of case studies I intend to discover the answer to my questions.

F. THESIS OVERVIEW

In order to address these important and challenging questions the structure and use of a standard format will be critical. This is important to facilitate a sound analysis of the research, but it will also make it easier on the reader to progress through the thesis. Chapters II and III will provide a brief overview of the particular side's efforts since 2014 and how this compares to their Cold War propaganda efforts. Then selected film/video and photographic propaganda pieces from the Cold War period and since 2014 will be analyzed by examining their function, meaning, and historical themes. The case studies will also follow a standard format and examine a major military exercise conducted by Russia and one by NATO. Special focus in these case studies will be on propaganda efforts by Russia and NATO for and against each topic. Such an outline will best enable the quest to answer the questions posed by this thesis.

II. RUSSIAN PROPAGANDA SUCCESSOR TO A SOVIET PAST

This study makes the argument that Russian propaganda aimed at NATO, what some are calling hybrid warfare, is neither an altogether new nor especially startling phenomenon if one analyzes this process with some greater reference to European history and the record of the age of total war in the 20th century. Putin's Russia is the heir of the USSR and, in a way, of Tsarist Russia with its ideas, strategies, and tactics which left a deep imprint on the politics of Europe and beyond. That is, the indirect and direct impact of Russia especially on its western neighbors is not a new form of aggression, but a continuation of a long-term one in which Russian/Soviet ambitions were projected westward as part of statecraft and the subversive statecraft that was at the core of the Soviet state. The Russia of today draws from this Soviet past and though the ideologies of Russia and the Soviet Union are different relative to the supposed universal appeal of Marxism–Leninism in its Soviet form, there are many similarities to the goals, themes, methods, and means of Soviet propaganda as an expression of Russian statecraft. Thus, to comprehend and combat the Russian propaganda of today one must understand the Soviet propaganda of the past—a difficult task because of the generalized amnesia that has befallen the year 2020.

The first section of this chapter briefly examines the Soviet stance towards NATO after 1949 and the goals that the Soviets sought to support or even achieve through the use of anti-Western propaganda. Following this issue, the themes, methods, and means of Soviet propaganda targeting NATO are discussed. Lastly, eight pieces of visual propaganda are analyzed to provide a deeper understanding of the symbols and associated themes that the propagandists sought to amplify (or introduce) in the mind of the viewer.

In the second section of this chapter the focus shifts to Russian propaganda since 2014. It uses the same framework as the Soviet section in order to make it easy for the reader to note the similarities as well as the differences between Soviet and Russian propaganda. The section closes with an analysis of seven visual propaganda pieces that assist in clearly highlighting Russian propagandists' reuse of Soviet anti-NATO themes.

Finally, the chapter ends with a brief section providing insights and observations on Soviet and Russian propaganda with a particular emphasis on the latter. An examination of Russian propaganda regarding NATO and its Soviet antecedents serves as a predicate to answering the questions posed at the outset of this thesis, for by understanding the origins, goals, and techniques of Russian propaganda, the reader may derive lessons for NATO that are useful in the making of strategy.

A. THE SOVIET ROOTS OF RUSSIA'S PROPAGANDA AGAINST NATO

1. Soviet Views on Propaganda

Throughout the existence of the Soviet Union from the years after 1918 until 1991, the Soviet leadership placed great emphasis on propaganda as central to the regime at home and abroad and also the fate of its allies. The Soviet leadership saw it as a critical tool of both domestic and foreign policy. Propaganda could help to enhance the stature and policies of the Soviet state and the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU), demonize and divide a decadent West, and obscure the weakness of the USSR which was always a feature of the making of policy. Lenin recognized the importance of propaganda to the Bolshevik cause and using various means to spread it in the epoch prior to the revolution itself. In 1911 he wrote: "The art of any propagandist and agitator consists in his ability to find the best means of influencing any given audience, by presenting a definite truth, in such a way as to make it most convincing, most easy to digest, most graphic, and most strongly impressive."⁵⁴ Professor Emeritus Peter Kenez argues that during the Russian Revolution in 1917–1919, Lenin and his fellow revolutionaries grasped the propaganda value of the new medium of film better than anyone else.⁵⁵ Scholars Garth Jowett and Victoria O'Donnell write that Lenin and other leaders of the Bolshevik

⁵⁴ V.I. Lenin, "The Slogans and Organisation of Social-Democratic Work Inside and Outside the Duma," in *Sotsial-Demokrat*, No. 25, December 8 (21), 1911, ed. George Hanna, trans. Dora Cox, Fourth Edition, vol. 17 December 1910-April 1912, Lenin Collected Works (Moscow, USSR: Progress Publishers, 1977), 341, <https://www.marxists.org/archive/lenin/works/cw/pdf/lenin-cw-vol-17.pdf>.

⁵⁵ Peter Kenez, *The Birth of the Propaganda State: Soviet Methods of Mass Mobilization, 1917–1929* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1985), 106.

revolution embraced propaganda as a means to further the 1917 revolution and manipulate the thinking of a 170 million Russians, many of whom were illiterate. In this effort the Soviet leaders utilized all forms of communication: print, radio, art, photography and film, the latter being especially important given the illiteracy rates. They controlled it via a centralized, top-down bureaucracy.⁵⁶ Professor Emeritus Victoria Bonnell writes that the Bolshevik seizure of control over all forms of communication was necessary for them to generate consensus on “many fundamental issues of interpretation...by introducing new symbols, rituals, and visual imagery.”⁵⁷ The immense system of influence and manipulation lasted until the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991. A historical encyclopedia on propaganda charts the major shifts in the Soviet propaganda system during this time. Importantly, the encyclopedia notes the increasingly prevalent use of the myth of the Great Patriotic War throughout the Brezhnev period as the Soviet leadership sought to distract from the stagnation of the USSR.⁵⁸ Soviet propaganda was not limited to the domestic front. In the 1930s, the Soviet desire to foment communist revolution worldwide as well as hype the workers’ paradise of the Soviet Union necessitated the use of significant propaganda campaigns.⁵⁹ Intelligence analyst Kevin McCauley argues that the Soviets recognized the power of propaganda in having a “cumulative long-term effect to mobilize and strengthen existing opinion, define the terms of the debate, and...support other...campaigns.”⁶⁰ The emergence of the Cold War and the founding of NATO in 1949 provided a new opportunity for the USSR to utilize its massive propaganda infrastructure and an opponent to direct it against as more or less a continuation of the effort that came to a peak in the recent war.

⁵⁶ Jowett and O’Donnell, *Propaganda & Persuasion*, loc. 6376–6393 of 16608, Kindle.

⁵⁷ Victoria E. Bonnell, *Iconography of Power: Soviet Political Posters under Lenin and Stalin*, 1st ed. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999), 1.

⁵⁸ Cull, Culbert, and Welch, *Propaganda and Mass Persuasion*, 361–63.

⁵⁹ Jowett and O’Donnell, *Propaganda & Persuasion*, loc. 6446 of 16608, Kindle.

⁶⁰ Kevin McCauley, *Russian Influence Campaigns against the West: From the Cold War to Putin*, Kindle ed. (North Charleston, SC: CreateSpace Independent Publishing Platform, 2016), loc. 75 of 9797, Kindle.

The leadership of the Soviet Union throughout the Cold War highly valued and controlled propaganda campaigns at the highest levels of government. They also devoted significant resources to these operations.

The apparatus of the party state developed and utilized by the Soviets to develop, approve, and disseminate propaganda as well as the resources spent were significant. The U.S. Department of State, along with scholars including Richard Shultz, Roy Godson, Richard Staar, Clews, and Frederick Barghoorn, conclude that policies, themes, and the evaluation of the propaganda and active measure campaigns were decided by the Politburo.⁶¹ The structure of the propaganda bureaucracy varied over the course of the Soviet Union. According to Shultz, Godson, and Barghoorn, throughout the early Cold War period and lasting until 1978 the Department of Agitation and Propaganda of the CPSU Central Committee oversaw both domestic and foreign propaganda.⁶² The International Department's (ID) role was to coordinate the activities of foreign communist parties not in power as well as front groups.⁶³ After 1978, the Department of Agitation and Propaganda was replaced with the International Information Department (IID) and there is debate, as Shultz and Godson note, as to whether the IID really inherited the full roles and responsibilities of its predecessor or whether many of these went to the ID.⁶⁴ To support these vast propaganda and active measure operations the Soviets spent billions. According to Staar, the Central Intelligence Agency estimated that in the late 1970s and early 1980s,

⁶¹ US Department of State, *Soviet Active Measures: A Report on the Substance and Process of Anti-US Disinformation and Propaganda Campaigns* (Washington, DC: US Department of State, August 1986), 2, 5, <http://insidethecoldwar.org/sites/default/files/documents/Soviet%20Active%20Measures%20Substance%20and%20Process%20of%20Anti-US%20Disinformation%20August%201986.pdf>; Richard H. Shultz and Roy Godson, *Dezinformatsia: Active Measures in Soviet Strategy* (Washington, DC: Pergamon-Brassey's, 1984), 25–27; Richard Felix Staar, *Foreign Policies of the Soviet Union* (Stanford, CA: Hoover Institution Press, Stanford University, 1991), 77; John C. Clews, *Communist Propaganda Techniques* (New York: Frederick A. Praeger, 1964), 70–71; Frederick C. Barghoorn, *Soviet Foreign Propaganda* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1964), 244.

⁶² Shultz and Godson, *Dezinformatsia*, 25–26; Barghoorn, *Soviet Foreign Propaganda*, 244.

⁶³ US Department of State, *Soviet Active Measures*, 1.

⁶⁴ Shultz and Godson, *Dezinformatsia*, 26–27; US Department of State, *Soviet Active Measures*, 13–14.

as conflict with NATO resumed in connection with the Afghan invasion, the Polish crisis, and the INF episode, the Soviet Union was spending up to \$4 billion annually on foreign propaganda and active measure operations.⁶⁵

2. How the Soviets Used Propaganda Against NATO

Soviet propaganda against NATO can be divided into white, grey, and black propaganda. These anti-NATO propaganda campaigns formed a subset of the larger propaganda apparatus that was used in conjunction with *aktivnyye meropriyatiya* or “active measures” to influence foreign nations and populations in order to further Soviet policy and objectives.

The categorization of propaganda into white, gray, and black is based upon the transparency of the source of the information as well as the degree of truth conveyed. Staar focuses more on the source of the Soviet propaganda in characterizing it. He writes that Soviet white propaganda originated from such official sources as Radio Moscow or the Telegraph Agency of the Soviet Union (TASS) though it was coordinated and directed by the Soviet propaganda bureaucracy. Grey propaganda emanated from groups that had an appearance of independence as Soviet friendship societies or the World Peace Council and thus the Soviet direction and control of the messaging was obscured. Lastly, black propaganda supposedly originated in the targeted countries, but was really orchestrated by the KGB or other clandestine units.⁶⁶ Jowett and O'Donnell, generally discussing the characterization of propaganda, equally focus on the degree of truth in the message as well as how transparent to the recipient the source origin is.⁶⁷ Clews, writing decades before Jowett and O'Donnell, provides a shorter but similar evaluation of propaganda categories.⁶⁸

⁶⁵ Staar, *Foreign Policies of the Soviet Union*, 75–76.

⁶⁶ Staar, 78–79.

⁶⁷ Jowett and O'Donnell, *Propaganda & Persuasion*, loc. 891–1053 of 16608, Kindle.

⁶⁸ Clews, *Communist Propaganda Techniques*, 9.

The phrase *aktivnyye meropriyatiya* or active measures covers a number of covert practices used by the Soviets to influence foreign governments and populations. Many of these operations supported or were supported by propaganda to benefit the Soviet Union. The U.S. Department of State defines Soviet active measures as “covert or deceptive operations conducted in support of Soviet foreign policy.”⁶⁹ The techniques included forgeries, political influence operations, and media manipulation. Starr agrees with this definition but includes assassinations as an additional form of active measures.⁷⁰ Propaganda worked in conjunction with active measures for example by promulgating through radio and print media fake or misleading information found in forgeries developed and planted by Soviet clandestine units.

3. The Tools Used by the USSR to Disseminate Anti-NATO Propaganda

The Soviet propaganda apparatus used multiple forms of communication to disseminate anti-NATO propaganda. These forms included broadcasts (radio and television), print publications especially copy provided by print agencies, interviews and speeches by Soviet officials, efforts of cultural and friendship organizations, posters, film, and military parades. This was done to both expose the greatest possible number of individuals of the targeted populace to the propaganda and to increase through repetition the likelihood of the propaganda’s influence. It is worth describing a few of these means to give the reader a sense of the Soviet Union’s efforts and the resources devoted to propaganda.

Radio broadcasts and to a lesser extent television broadcasts were a primary means of disseminating propaganda to the world. According to Staar, in 1989, Radio Moscow spent 2,179 hours a week on foreign broadcasts. This is total is based on broadcasts in 84 languages to over 100 countries. Other communist states in East and Central Europe contributed another 2,270 hours of foreign radio broadcasts. To give perspective, the hours

⁶⁹ US Department of State, *Soviet Active Measures*, 1.

⁷⁰ Staar, *Foreign Policies of the Soviet Union*, 123–27.

broadcast per week in 1950 by the USSR and East–Central European communist countries was 533 and 412, respectively.⁷¹ Similar to the Soviet approach to the press wire services, the Soviets supported a nominally independent radio network, Radio Peace and Progress (RPP) that began broadcasting in 1964. As Staar writes, the RPP allowed the Soviets to broadcast more inflammatory or harsh messages while denying responsibility and pointing to the RPP’s independence. The RPP devoted 158 hours per week to programming in 15 foreign languages.⁷²

Print publications including newspapers, journals, magazines, and pamphlets all were used to further Soviet propaganda messaging. The press agencies of the USSR were especially important as they had a large staff and were located worldwide. This allowed the Soviets to build connections with local newspapers and find more vehicles for Soviet propaganda. The TASS and the Agentstvo Pechati Novosti (APN) were, according to a couple of sources, the most important.⁷³ TASS, founded in 1904, was one of the oldest news agencies in the Soviet Union. According to the 1986 Soviet Active Measures report, TASS had a staff of 400 spread globally with accredited correspondents in 126 nations. From the 1960s to the 1980s, the number of countries with access to the TASS service doubled to 115 with TASS providing copy to over 600 newspapers, networks, and other agencies.⁷⁴ The work of TASS, as the official news service of the USSR, was supplemented by the unofficial APN, founded in 1961. APN, like many other aspects of life in the USSR, was controlled by the CPSU. Staar writes that one of the heads of the APN was a KGB officer who assisted in planning the invasion of Czechoslovakia in 1968. In addition, he notes that an entire section of APN was staffed by KGB officers.⁷⁵ Of note, TASS and APN news articles lacked, in many cases, author bylines.⁷⁶

⁷¹ Staar, 89–90.

⁷² Staar, 90.

⁷³ US Department of State, *Soviet Active Measures*, 6; Staar, *Foreign Policies of the Soviet Union*, 92.

⁷⁴ US Department of State, *Soviet Active Measures*, 6.

⁷⁵ Staar, *Foreign Policies of the Soviet Union*, 92–93.

⁷⁶ US Department of State, *Soviet Active Measures*, 6.

The Soviets used talented artists to illustrate graphics and cartoons that could quickly convey propaganda themes with few words. Not only could these images be easily disseminated via print pamphlets, but they could also be enlarged and used as posters in demonstrations. For example, McCauley writes of a poster and leaflet published in October 1979 by the World Peace Council, an organization covertly supported by the Soviets, that were used to rally support and spark protests against NATO approving deployment of Pershing II Intermediate Range Ballistic Missiles (IRBMs) and additional nuclear armed cruise missiles in Europe.⁷⁷

Film also played an important propaganda role in visually conveying the might of communism and the USSR while attacking NATO. In the wake of the 1961 construction of the Berlin Wall, the offensive screed against NATO went into overdrive, and one example of this process was the 1963 film *Streng Geheim* or *For Your Eyes Only*. Produced in East Germany, the film depicted the East German security services (Stasi) uncovering and foiling a plot by the Western allies to invade the German Democratic Republic (GDR).⁷⁸ Of note, according to scholar Marcus M. Payk, the film made documentary claims and stated that the film was based on real-life events.⁷⁹ In this vein, NATO was just a continuation of Hitler's Germany by other means, and the Wall and the regime in the GDR were a bulwark against NATO aggression to overturn the Yalta order of the international system.

4. The Soviet View on NATO

Throughout the Cold War, the leadership of the Soviet Union viewed NATO as a military and political threat, though the severity of the threat shifted throughout this period as the Cold War went from episodes of armed confrontation to a reduction of tensions and

⁷⁷ McCauley, *Russian Influence Campaigns Against the West*, loc. 4559 of 9797, Kindle.

⁷⁸ "For Eyes Only - Top Secret," DEFA Film Library, accessed August 3, 2019, <https://ecommerce.umass.edu/defa/film/3632>.

⁷⁹ Marcus M. Payk, "The Enemy Within," in *Cold War Cultures: Perspectives on Eastern and Western European Societies*, ed. Annette Vowinkel and Thomas Lindenberger (New York: Berghahn Books, 2012), 106.

back to armed confrontation. NATO was perceived as a military threat initially due to its support for the rearmament of West Germany and its integration into NATO in the period 1949–1955, later when the U.S. made it clear that its nuclear umbrella extended to NATO in the middle and late 1950s, and ultimately as NATO obtained nuclear weapons based in Europe in this period as well. NATO was a political threat as it helped to unify the Western European democracies against Communism where, in the late 1940s, local Stalinist parties in especially Italy and France were on the march. Author Geoffrey Roberts argues that, among other reasons, Stalin and his successors strenuously objected to a rearmed West Germany because of the formative experiences of contending with a militarized and powerful Nazi Germany.⁸⁰ The Federal Republic of Germany (FRG) as an extension of the Third Reich and the U.S. as the heir to the ideas of the Third Reich stood uppermost in this cosmos of Soviet propaganda canards which also found willing adherents in the publics of NATO allies themselves as well as in the non-aligned nations. Further support for the view that the Soviets believed NATO to be a threat comes from scholar Erik P. Hoffmann, who writes that Stalin perceived the socialist countries of Eastern Europe that had earlier been in the German orbit of Axis Europe as crucial for the defense of the Soviet Union as they provided a buffer from the military and ideological threat posed by the Western democracies. Stalin sought to stop NATO's creation and when that failed, he moved to divide and weaken it through an unrelenting effort of psychological aggression that, for instance, argued that the FRG was illegitimate.⁸¹ Stalin pursued this policy against NATO because the creation of NATO was seen as a threat to this buffer zone and the Soviets' ability to influence and control weaker countries in Western Europe. Scholar R. Craig Nation points out that the creation of the Warsaw Pact was directly linked to the rearmament and integration of the FRG into NATO in 1949–1955.⁸² From the late 1950s and into the 1980s NATO's military threat to Russia was particularly embodied in NATO's

⁸⁰ Geoffrey Roberts, *Stalin's Wars from World War to Cold War, 1939–1953*. (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2008), loc. 8237 of 13968, Kindle.

⁸¹ Erik P. Hoffmann, "Soviet Foreign Policy Aims and Accomplishments from Lenin to Brezhnev," *Proceedings of the Academy of Political Science* 36, no. 4 (1987): 18, <https://doi.org/10.2307/1173830>.

⁸² R. Craig Nation, *Black Earth, Red Star: A History of Soviet Security Policy, 1917–1991* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1992), 218–19.

fielding of tactical and theater-level nuclear weapons in response to which anti-nuclear movements evolved, for example, in the United Kingdom (UK) and the FRG. Nation writes of the Soviet angst at failing to prevent this deployment in the late 1950s and later, in the 1977–1987 INF epoch, in bitterly objecting to NATO’s approval of the Pershing II IRBM’s and cruise missiles to Europe. Nation argues that the introduction of these theater nuclear weapons and other advanced technologies eliminated the safety provided by the Soviet’s Eastern Europe buffer.⁸³ Throughout the Cold War period the Soviets relied on propaganda, among other tools, to minimize the threat posed by NATO to the USSR’s security and to its foreign policy goals.

5. Goals of Soviet Anti-NATO Propaganda

Given the perceived threat posed by NATO to the Soviet Union in the epoch 1949–1989, the Soviets set their propaganda apparatus to the goal of destabilizing and thus weakening the cohesiveness of the NATO allies. Divisions about policy and strategy within NATO would in turn allow the USSR greater influence in Europe and also reduce the effectiveness of Western European states if a general conflict ensued. Soviet propaganda against NATO sought to bolster the image that the Soviet Union only wanted peace and that the West was the aggressor as in the traditional view of western Europe in the Russian view of its own special place in the system of states and the perpetual struggle between culture and civilization as adapted to the policy of the USSR in the 1950s onward.

Author John C. Clews argues that Soviet communists saw it as critical that any opposition or potential opposition in Central Europe be prevented from uniting especially in an alliance such as NATO.⁸⁴ Propaganda could help realize this goal in a manner short of conventional or nuclear warfare. McCauley writes that the Soviets sought to shift the balance of alliances in the USSR’s favor and that of the Warsaw Pact by sowing discord and exploiting differences between the NATO allies. The propaganda campaign against

⁸³ Nation, 235, 252–53, 265, 307.

⁸⁴ Clews, *Communist Propaganda Techniques*, 172–73.

NATO also sought to foster a favorable environment for Kremlin policies while hiding the true objectives of the Soviets.⁸⁵ Traditional leftist propaganda messaging focused on peace and reduction of tension could lull populations into mistaking or misreading Soviet intentions and foreign policy objectives. In 1983 at the time of the INF crisis in Western Europe, U.S. analyst Charles Sorrels reported that the Soviet priority goals were to “weaken the defensive ties...to establish Soviet predominance over Western Europe.”⁸⁶ Propaganda could help by undermining support for a major U.S. armed forces presence on the Continent, deployment of new nuclear weapons, and aggressive stances toward the USSR. Starr wrote that the objective of external Soviet propaganda was to portray the foreign policy of the USSR as seeking only peace. In addition, such propaganda portrayed the Soviet Union as the only just and fair nation on the planet.⁸⁷ Propaganda could portray the Soviets as the peaceful party and NATO as the aggressor. In pursuit of these goals the Soviets focused on a number of major themes that appeared throughout all forms of their anti-NATO propaganda.

6. The Common Themes Illustrated by Soviet Anti-NATO Propaganda

Soviet themes found in anti-NATO propaganda tend to focus on three facets: NATO as a militaristic and revanchist alliance; NATO as a puppet of the war mongering and monied interests in an imperialistic U.S.; and the USSR as the peaceful and aggrieved party. These themes appeared consistently in order to reinforce the Soviet messaging and to support the aforementioned goals. Clews writes that the communists had long argued that it was capitalism that manifested aggression, imperialism, and warmongering. Thus, since communists were not capitalists, they were incapable of harboring these traits and instead pursued more peaceful endeavors.⁸⁸ Roberts supports this in writing that the

⁸⁵ McCauley, *Russian Influence Campaigns against the West*, loc. 2577 of 9797, Kindle.

⁸⁶ Charles A. Sorrels, “Soviet Propaganda Campaign against NATO” (Washington, DC: U.S. Arms Control and Disarmament Agency, October 1983), 1, <http://hdl.handle.net/2027/uc1.b3907717>.

⁸⁷ Starr, *Foreign Policies of the Soviet Union*, 75, 78.

⁸⁸ Clews, *Communist Propaganda Techniques*, 110.

propaganda theme prevalent in the late 1940s and early 1950s of the USSR having a peace-loving policy had its roots in the 1920s and originated in the view that the economic inequalities and the competition viewed as inherent of capitalism consistently led to war.⁸⁹ Clews points out that the Soviets used propaganda to encourage complacency among its international adversaries, “to encourage rivalries between others on the ‘divide and rule’ principle,” to shield the USSR from critical attention, and to encourage the belief that world communism is inevitable.⁹⁰

7. Soviet Visual Propaganda Analysis

The following pieces of media: a photograph, a film, a cartoon, and a number of posters were selected, and an analysis performed on each in order to provide a sampling of the propaganda the Soviet Union and Warsaw Pact directed against NATO. Photographs, cartoons, posters, and film were an integral element in disseminating Soviet messages to an internal and external audience and were distributed through various means discussed in the previous section.

These propaganda posters and cartoons come from a rich tradition of Bolshevik/Soviet propaganda art that sought to influence widely and utilized imagery to do so, since much of the Russian population at the time of the revolution was illiterate. As Professor Emeritus Tom Gleason notes, some of the earliest propaganda posters were those produced by the ROSTA (Russian Telegraph Agency) of the early 1920s. They were made for display in windows and other locations to motivate the Russian population to achieve goals established by the state.⁹¹ Even in these early days, the artists were highly skilled and organized into committees and unions. Later, after Nazi Germany’s invasion of the Soviet Union, the Union of Soviet Artists formed a studio within TASS, modelled on the

⁸⁹ Roberts, *Stalin’s Wars*, loc. 8263 of 13968, Kindle.

⁹⁰ Clews, *Communist Propaganda Techniques*, 22.

⁹¹ Abbott (Tom) Gleason, “Views and Re-Views: Soviet Political Posters and Cartoons, Then and Now,” Brown University Library, October 6, 2008, https://library.brown.edu/cds/Views_and_Reviews/essay.html.

ROSTA studio, to create propaganda posters to support military defense.⁹² Though primarily aimed at a domestic audience, these TASS studio posters found wide distribution amongst the Allied Powers, especially in the U.S. and UK.⁹³ Two other important generators of propaganda art were *Krokodil* (The Crocodile) and the *Boevoi Karandash* (Militant or War Pencil). The *Krokodil* was a satirical publication produced in the USSR from 1922 until 2008. It lampooned topics, including Western governments and policies, that the CPSU sought to attack.⁹⁴ *Boevoi Karandash* was an artists' collective formed in Leningrad in 1939 that produced posters until 1945 and then resumed creation of satirical posters from 1956 until 1970.⁹⁵

The postcard, Figure 1, was produced in 1958 by Kukryniksy, an artist collective. This collective was formed in 1924 by three artists: Porfirii Krylov (1902–1990), Mikhail Kupriianov (1903–1991), and Nikolai Sokolov (1903–2000). Throughout its existence, the collective was prolific and created illustrations for Soviet newspapers such as *Pravda* and magazines including *Krokodil*. During the Second World War, Kukryniksy worked at the TASS studio noted earlier. Kukryniksy won numerous awards (five Stalin Prizes, one Lenin Prize, and one State Prize of the USSR) for their illustrations and paintings from the 1940s into the 1970s.⁹⁶

⁹² “The TASS Window Poster Studio,” *Windows on the War: Soviet TASS Posters at Home and Abroad, 1941–1945*, The Art Institute of Chicago, October 23, 2013, <https://archive.artic.edu/tass/studio/>.

⁹³ “TASS Windows: World War II and the Art of Agitation,” Nailya Alexander Gallery, February 6, 2019, <http://www.nailyaalexandergallery.com/exhibitions/tass-windows-world-war-ii-and-the-art-of-agitation>.

⁹⁴ “Krokodil: The Leading Satirical Publication of the Soviet Era,” East View Information Services, accessed September 10, 2019, <https://www.eastview.com/resources/journals/krokodil/>.

⁹⁵ “Series of Boevoi Karandash (Military Pencil) Posters,” St. Petersburg Government - Committee for the State Preservation of Historical and Cultural Monuments, accessed August 18, 2019, <http://kgiop.gov.spb.ru/en/popularization/archival-collection-kgiop/series-boevoi-karandash-military-pencil-posters/>.

⁹⁶ “Kukryniksy,” *Windows on the War: Soviet TASS Posters at Home and Abroad, 1941–1945*, The Art Institute of Chicago, October 23, 2013, <https://archive.artic.edu/tass/kukryniksy/>.



Figure 1. Soviet Anti-NATO Propaganda Postcard against General Speidel of the Bundeswehr in His NATO CINCCENT Role.⁹⁷

This illustration attacks West German membership in NATO as the legacy of a revival of the Wehrmacht. It features General Hans Speidel, a Wehrmacht general during the Second World War who later served in the West German Army. Once the new Bundeswehr came into existence despite an intense USSR and GDR propaganda campaign to delegitimize the armament of the Bonn state in NATO, General Speidel was appointed Supreme Commander of the NATO ground forces in Europe. He held the post from 1957 to 1963. He played an important role in the rearmament of West Germany and its integration into NATO.⁹⁸

⁹⁷ Source: Kukryniksy, *The Return of Hans Speidel*, 1958, Postcard, 14.5 x 10 cm, <https://www.ebay.com/itm/Vintage-USSR-postcard-1958-Kukryniksy-Anti-WAR-propaganda-NATO-By-Shpeidel-/183756651560>.

⁹⁸ Joseph Berger, "Gen. Hans Speidel, Who Plotted to Kill Hitler," *The New York Times*, November 29, 1984, National edition, sec. Obituaries.

General Speidel is depicted as a Nazi soldier and the intent is clearly to link in the propaganda recipient's mind NATO with three themes: Nazi Germany, warmongering, and as a vassal of the U.S. The first goal manifested the Soviet tactic of connecting NATO with the barbaric behavior of the Nazi regime and thus making NATO a criminal organization. The second theme bolstered Soviet claims that the NATO Alliance was aggressive and offensive in contrast to a peaceful USSR and Warsaw Pact. The third sought to sow discord between the U.S. and the European NATO members for those in NATO who had previously been a victim of the Wehrmacht, as in the case of France.

In order to generate the linkages to the three themes numerous symbols quite familiar to viewers of this period appear. Speidel is decorated with two Iron Cross medals with the ribbons stating, "War Against France" and "War Against England." On his head he wears the *Stahlhelm*, the style of helmet made iconic by its usage by German forces during the First and Second World War, emblazoned with the Nazi swastika. It has what appears to be a horn like on a contact mine or as if Speidel has physical horns like a devil. On one side a dripping blood stain appears in the outline of part of the European continent. To accentuate the idea that Speidel, representing a rearmed West Germany, and by extension NATO are harbingers of death and destruction a skull appears on each of his epaulettes as in fact was worn by certain officers of the German military. The officer's cover with the wording "NATO" and "European Army" indicates Speidel's role as Supreme Commander of the NATO ground forces in the late 1950s and early 1960s. Placing it on top of the *Stahlhelm* indicates that NATO is built on the foundation of Nazism. The cover is adorned with a skull resting on what appears to be a mushroom cloud of an atomic bomb explosion rising from the visor. This skull on the officer's cap would also elicit in the mind of the viewer of this period the *Totenkopf* or death's head widely associated with *Schutzstaffel* (SS) units. The swastika pupils, glasses, beak-like nose, and frown all serve to convey a feeling of a cold and calculating individual. Lastly, a large hand reaches out to tap Speidel in a paternalistic gesture. The items adorning the arm: the suit, watch, and dollar sign cufflink all signal that the imperialist, capitalist U.S. is in control.

The only vibrant colors, yellow and red, serve two distinct purposes as they stand in stark contrast to the grayscale of the rest of the illustration. The yellow background

forces the figure of Speidel out into the viewers' space. The red color of the fresh blood reminds the viewer of the stakes, the human lives that NATO will destroy.

B. Semenov's poster, Figure 2, produced in 1961 is a dramatic depiction replete with symbols connecting NATO to themes of warmongering, Nazi Germany, and subordination to the U.S. The Federal German Chancellor Konrad Adenauer rides in a huge thurible or censer, usually a vessel used to dispense incense during religious ceremonies—a play on Adenauer's Catholic roots and the Rhenish capital of Bonn in West Germany. Here the censer brings war. The vessel is filled with huge bombs, likely atomic, painted with letters that spell out "NATO." Adenauer carries a flaming torch symbolizing war while also calling to mind the torches carried by Nazis during party rallies. This connection to Nazism is reinforced by the Iron Cross medal hanging from his neck.

The direction of motion of the censer is towards the Brandenburg Gate in the bottom right of the illustration as an indication of West German revanchism which was a standard article of Soviet propaganda especially at the time of the Berlin Wall and the Berlin crisis which had revived in 1958. At this time, the Brandenburg Gate fell within the border of East Berlin and thus within the bounds of the Warsaw Pact—as its front line against German aggression. The censer is decorated around its base and on the chains attached to it with dollar signs. The thurible is being swung by a huge hand protruding out of an elegant jacket and shirt sleeve with a "US" cufflink. This indicates NATO and West Germany in particular are supported by the capitalist greed of the U.S. Indeed, the censer is controlled by the disembodied hand, like in Figure 1.

In the upper right appears a quote from a speech given August 1, 1961, on the eve of the construction of the Wall, by Soviet Premier Nikita Khrushchev. Roughly translated, it reads "The aggressive friends of the West with the help of Chancellor Adenauer mobilize the material and spiritual forces of Germany to prepare for a third world war." The caption in bold uses an idiomatic expression to describe the U.S. and roughly translated, it reads "Washington would not have themselves hurt."



Figure 2. NATO Censer Dispenses War.⁹⁹

Mark Abramov (1913–1994), a Soviet illustrator and cartoonist, designed artworks for magazines like *Krokodil* as well as newspapers like *Pravda*. Like other Soviet illustrators he created propaganda posters at the TASS studio during the Second World War.¹⁰⁰ Figure 3 is a poster he produced in 1969 with the caption “In the frame of NATO.” The text in the bottom left translates as “The Bundeswehr forces numbering half a million form the aggressive military core of NATO.” The poster seeks to link the Nazi past with

⁹⁹ Source: B. Semenov, *Censer*, 1961, Poster, 16 3/4” x 22 1/4,” <http://www.sovietpropaganda.org/product/b-semenov-censer-1961/>.

¹⁰⁰ “Mark Aleksandrovich Abramov (Moa),” *Windows on the War: Soviet TASS Posters at Home and Abroad, 1941–1945*, The Art Institute of Chicago, October 23, 2013, <https://archive.artic.edu/tass/moa/>.

West Germany and NATO and the Bundeswehr which by 1969 was up to strength and well integrated in NATO's force disposition. In addition, it seeks to instill fear of a resurgent West Germany and to put a lie to a founding idea of NATO: that the Alliance can integrate West Germany and control it from starting a third world war.¹⁰¹

In the illustration, a massive, ogre-like figure wears the *Feldgrau* or field-grey uniform of the German Wehrmacht. His epaulettes and collar indicate that he is an enlisted infantry soldier. At his neck he wears the Iron Cross medal. The helmet is similar to the helmet of Hans Speidel in Figure 1. It has plugs emanating from the top of it, like the contact spikes of a mine or the horns of a devilish creature. Also present on the helmet is the Nazi *Hoheitszeichen* (eagle and swastika), the national coat of arms in Nazi Germany. The uniform, Iron Cross, and *Hoheitszeichen* would all be recognizable to viewers who had memories of the Second World War and would evoke associations with Nazi Germany. The effect of his grimace, crossed arms, and with the helmet pulled low to hide his eyes both dehumanizes the figure and presents him as a cold, intimidating soldier.

The German soldier's bulk is crushing the yellow figures, squeezing them out of the frame which his size is also causing to bend and in three of the corners, crack apart. The figures representing the other NATO members are depicted in an unflattering manner by using yellow and showing writhing hands, feet, and heads with beady eyes and pointy noses. Some of the faces depict shock, fear, and sadness (tears). The message here is clear: a rearmed West Germany, heir to the Nazi past, is again a danger to Europe. It will dominate its NATO allies. Thus, the implication is that the West German Bundeswehr, a large and aggressive force, will lead NATO on the offensive.

¹⁰¹ "Lord Ismay, 1952 - 1957," NATO: Origins: NATO Leaders, NATO, accessed August 27, 2019, http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/declassified_137930.htm; William Burr, "NATO's Original Purpose: Double Containment of the Soviet Union and 'Resurgent' Germany," Briefing Book (Washington, DC: National Security Archive, December 11, 2018), <https://nsarchive.gwu.edu/briefing-book/nuclear-vault/2018-12-11/natos-original-purpose-double-containment-soviet-union-resurgent-germany>.



Figure 3. West Germany Fracturing NATO Alliance.¹⁰²

Figure 4, is a propaganda poster of the Soviet Union Ministry of Defense, with the caption “Unconquerable Barrier.” The creator of the poster and its year of creation are unclear with the artist signature unrecognizable and with the decades of the 1950s or 1970s suggested for the poster’s creation. However, clues exist that point toward a creator as well

¹⁰² Source: Mark Abramov, *In the Frame of NATO*, 1969, Polychrome poster, 13 1/4” x 9” (33.655 x 22.86 cm), <https://collections.ushmm.org/search/catalog/irn513988>.

as to dating the artwork. While researching this poster, three illustrations that are slight variations on what is portrayed in Figure 4 were uncovered.¹⁰³ These other posters are attributed to Mark Abramov and date from the late 1960s and into the mid-1970s. It is possible Abramov created or contributed to Figure 4. The flags, discussed later, provide additional clues to dating the artwork. This piece of propaganda conveys themes including the USSR and Warsaw Pact as powerful while unaggressive, NATO as bellicose, and the Alliance as an entity driven by U.S. power.

A gigantic figure in the style of Eisenstein's Ivan the Terrible, wearing a medieval Russian helmet with a red star, dominates the scene and immediately draws the viewer's attention. This powerful warrior with a chest that appears to be made of stone blocks holds a huge shield embossed with the words "Warsaw Treaty." In his right hand he grasps a massive missile representative of the Soviet atomic arsenal. The positioning of these implements of war with the shield at the ready and the missile held upright, not pointing at the oncoming figure, demonstrate the USSR is not warmongering. Instead it is merely preparing to defend against an attack of what is a modern version of the German Order also known as the Teutonic Knights. The depiction of this warrior may be a reference to Ilya Murometz or Ilya of Murom, a bogatyr and medieval warrior in Russian folklore. Numerous descriptions of Ilya note his peasant origins, and this would have made this legend especially appealing to CPSU leadership.¹⁰⁴ The warrior is illuminated by the bright yellow rays of a rising sun comprised of the hammer and sickle symbolizing the union of the workers and the peasants.

¹⁰³ Mark Abramov, *Cold War Shield Against NATO*, 1976, Poster, 48 x 32 cm, 1976, [https://www.abebooks.com/art-prints/Cold-Shield-Against-NATO-Abramov-Soviet/30147119307/bd](https://www.abebooks.com/art-prints/Cold-Shield-Against-NATO-Abramov-Soviet/30147119307/bd;); Mark Abramov, *Soviet Five Year Plan Is a Reliable Shield for Peaceful Countries*, 1966, Poster, 1966, <https://www.pinterest.com/pin/111604896995467911/>; Mark Abramov, *Reliable Guardian*, 1975, Poster, 31 1/2" x 22 1/2" (80 x 57 cm), 1975, https://www.etsy.com/listing/173621807/cold-war-period-ussr-warsaw-pact?utm_source=OpenGraph&utm_medium=PageTools&utm_campaign=Share.

¹⁰⁴ Josepha Sherman, *Storytelling: An Encyclopedia of Mythology and Folklore* (New York: Routledge, 2008), 234–35; *Encyclopaedia Britannica Online*, s.v. "Ilya Of Murom: Russian Literary Hero," June 11, 2015, <https://www.britannica.com/topic/Ilya-of-Murom>; RT, "Prominent Russians: Ilya Muromets," *Russiopedia: History and Mythology*, 2020, <https://russiopedia.rt.com/prominent-russians/history-and-mythology/ilya-muromets/>.

Along the left border of the poster appear from top to bottom flags of seven of the eight founding states of the Warsaw Pact. They are the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, the People's Republic of Bulgaria, the Hungarian People's Republic, the German Democratic Republic, the Polish People's Republic, Socialist Republic of Romania, and the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic. The People's Republic of Albania was the eighth member of the Warsaw Pact. Its flag is omitted as it withdrew from the Warsaw Pact in 1968.¹⁰⁵ This omission, along with the Hungarian tricolor that was approved in 1957, helps to date the poster to after 1968.¹⁰⁶

In the bottom right, a warrior with a grotesque, goblin-like visage faces the stoic Soviet warrior. The figure wears a Germanic medieval helmet, carries a shield emblazoned with a swastika, and wields a sword in a shape of a missile inscribed with the word "Revanchism." The depiction of this figure asserts that the FRG is the heir to the aggression from the time of the German Order to Operation Barbarossa. A battle axe chipped by combat and dripping with blood sticks out of the saddle. The figure sits on a saddle that is a map while its "horse" has a head shaped like a bomb with "US" on it. The hoof prints are in the shape of bombs with "US" on them. The tail is comprised of bills with dollar signs. It implies that the figure is carried by a horse supported by U.S. atomic weapons and propelled by capitalism. The NATO figure also seems to be on an incline, as if he has ridden across Western Europe, and now cresting the hill faces the might of the USSR and Warsaw Pact. Note that all of the colors used are dark and unattractive ones and contrast starkly with the bright and vibrant colors used to depict the Soviet warrior, flags, and the sun.

The imagery might evoke in some viewers a comparison of the figure representing NATO to Miguel de Cervantes' Don Quixote. Here, the NATO figure is like Don Quixote who imagined windmills to be dangerous giants, thus NATO sees the Warsaw Pact as an existential threat and is preparing to foolishly tilt at it. The depiction of the Soviet warrior

¹⁰⁵ "What Was the Warsaw Pact?," The Cold War: Defence and Deterrence, NATO, accessed August 17, 2019, http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/declassified_138294.htm.

¹⁰⁶ *Encyclopaedia Britannica Online*, s.v. "Flag of Hungary," November 12, 2018, <https://www.britannica.com/topic/flag-of-Hungary>.

intends to convey the theme that USSR is not aggressive and yet that the Soviet Union is immensely strong compared to NATO.



Figure 4. Heroic Soviet Warrior Holds Off NATO.¹⁰⁷

Alexander Zhitomirsky (1907–1993), was an important Soviet artist and illustrator who created cartoons, posters, collages, and photomontages throughout his career.¹⁰⁸ According to the curator at the Nailya Alexander Gallery, his propaganda creations were

¹⁰⁷ Source: Mark Abramov, *Unconquerable Barrier*, Polychrome poster, 13 1/4" x 9" (33.655 x 22.86 cm), accessed August 10, 2019, <https://collections.ushmm.org/search/catalog/irn513994>.

¹⁰⁸ National Gallery of Art, "Alexander Zhitomirsky Biography," 2019, <https://www.nga.gov/collection/artist-info.21745.html>.

airdropped by Soviet units on Nazi German military units during the Second World War. Later, in the 1950s and 1960s his photomontages became well known in the USSR and he worked for 42 years at the *Soviet Union* magazine as its art director.¹⁰⁹ Zhitomirsky created his photomontage, “Hysterical War Drummer,” Figure 5, in 1948. It was published in *Literaturnaia Gazeta*, a weekly political and cultural newspaper, on March 24, 1948.¹¹⁰ It aims to spread the propaganda themes of the U.S. as warmongering and as an heir to fascism.

Although this work does not mention NATO, it is important to analyze this due to President Harry Truman’s connection to the development of NATO and that the propaganda themes present in the piece appear in anti-NATO propaganda. NATO did not exist when this piece was created. However, this was a time of increasing tensions as the Axis-defeating alliance between the Western powers and the Soviet Union collapsed and the Cold War started. According to NATO scholar Lawrence Kaplan, while early discussions and negotiations regarding an Atlantic alliance were held in secret in the last week of March 1948 and then from June until September 1948, there was public indication of support for a transatlantic alliance via the Vandenberg amendment in Congress and transatlantic statecraft between the UK and U.S. On March 17, 1948, while addressing the U.S. Congress, President Harry Truman applauded the signing of the Treaty of Brussels that same day and promised that America would assist the self-defense efforts of the Brussels Pact. Later, in June 1948, it was announced by Canada, the UK, and the U.S. that they were starting talks with founding countries of the Brussels Pact.¹¹¹

In Zhitomirsky’s photomontage, Truman appears to look crazed or maniacally amused. He sits atop a skyscraper and beats a drum. The figure’s left arm is raised and outstretched preparing to deliver another beat. A shadow is cast by the Truman figure, yet

¹⁰⁹ “Alexander Zhitomirsky Biography,” Nailya Alexander Gallery, accessed August 24, 2019, <http://www.nailyaalexandergallery.com/russian-photography/alexander-zhitomirsky>.

¹¹⁰ Erika Wolf, *Aleksandr Zhitomirsky: Photomontage as a Weapon of World War II and the Cold War* (Chicago, IL: Art Institute of Chicago, 2016), 50.

¹¹¹ Lawrence S. Kaplan, “Origins of NATO: 1948–1949,” *Emory International Law Review* 34, no. Special Issue (September 22, 2019): 22–24.

it is not him, but a silhouette clearly of Adolf Hitler with his left arm outstretched in the *Hiltegruß* salute. Zhitomirsky's creation seeks to form a number of ideas in the viewer's mind. First, he links Truman with Hitler and thus with evil. Second, the drum and Truman's beating of it calls to mind the drums used by military units and thus the approach of war. Third, placing Truman on top of the building indicates his domination of the world. Through the combination of this imagery one is left with the impression that Truman, a new Hitler, seeks to engulf the world in war so that he and the U.S. can dominate the globe. The juxtaposition of a NATO connected figure with Hitler is not an uncommon theme. It will be seen again later in this chapter when discussing Russian Federation anti-NATO propaganda.



Figure 5. Soviet Propaganda Links the Beat of the Past to the Present.¹¹²

¹¹² Source: Alexander Zhitomirsky, *Hysterical War Drummer*, 1948, Photomontage, 40.2 x 29.8 cm, <https://repository.library.brown.edu/studio/item/bdr:89387/>.

Soviet artist Boris Efimov (1899–2008) produced a huge body of work for the Bolsheviks during his career from the 1918 through the 1990s. According to author Stephen Norris, the year 1922 was an important one for Efimov as he moved to Moscow and found three jobs that contributed to his rise and provided employment for the rest of his career. First, he was given a permanent role at *Izvestiia*, a daily newspaper, as the international affairs cartoonist. He then helped to found *Krokodil* and joined *Ogonek*, a 19th century Russian literary magazine reestablished by his brother. Efimov created over 35,000 cartoons for these publications alone.¹¹³ Researcher Andrey Lazarev notes that Efimov won numerous awards including Stalin Prizes, USSR State Prizes, along with an Order of the Red Banner award and an Order of Lenin decoration during a career in which he produced hundreds of thousands of pieces of art.¹¹⁴ Efimov recognized the power of propaganda. In an interview for a 1999 Public Broadcasting Station television program on the Soviet Union called *Red Files*, Efimov provided some illuminating commentary:

The role and meaning of propaganda are very great, very great. Propaganda was born together with the Soviet regime in 1917, and through all 70 years of its existence propaganda helped to consolidate society, held it in some kind of unified, strong community. And when the Soviet Union disappeared and propaganda disappeared with it, there was left a sort of emptiness. Because where, on the one hand, there used to exist one united strong propaganda of the Soviet regime, there now exists several propagandas. Every group, every party has their own propaganda. All this is confusing. It creates some kind of instability. People are disappointed. They don't know who to believe. Now the absence of any kind of unified propaganda is a great misfortune for our country. And I hope that there will be a propaganda that will propagate truth, decency, legality and kindness.

And now when people are convinced that this past propaganda carried with it so many lies and propagated a lot of things that were not necessary to the people. Now when it is gone, and people don't know what to believe, people

¹¹³ Stephen M. Norris, "Laughter's Weapon and Pandora's Box: Boris Efimov in the Khrushchev Era," in *Cultural Cabaret: Russian and American Essays for Richard Stites*, ed. David Goldfrank and Pavel Lyssakov (Washington, DC: New Academia Publishing, 2012), 110–13.

¹¹⁴ Andrey Lazarev, "Two Soviet Cartoonists in the David King Collection at Tate," Tate Research Features, July 2018, <https://www.tate.org.uk/research/features/two-soviet-cartoonists>.

think that some kind of propaganda is necessary so that people believe in something.¹¹⁵

Efimov drew this anti-NATO cartoon, Figure 6, in 1969. It aims to influence the viewer towards considering NATO as an alliance lacking unity and forcibly held together and controlled by the U.S. and Germany. The themes of money and Nazism also appear.

At the top and in the center a figure wearing glasses and a cowboy hat, likely representing President Lyndon B. Johnson, holds ropes in both hands. He appears to be grimacing (perhaps from the exertion to control NATO) and looking at the figure to his immediate left. This individual is clearly meant to be German with the Iron Cross medal and Trachten hat with its feather shaped like a swastika. This might be Ludwig Erhard, Federal German Chancellor in the mid-1960s, who was born in Bavaria, served in the 22nd Royal Bavarian Artillery Regiment in the First World War, smoked cigars and was central to the idea of the FRG social market economy.¹¹⁶ This German figure's facial expression gives him the air that of all the figures he is not perturbed. He appears determined and in control. Perhaps it is Germany who is really in command, not the U.S. It is telling that the figures representing the U.S., France, and the UK are all looking at the German man. The Frenchman is a caricature of Charles de Gaulle who served as president from January 1959 until April 28, 1969. This figure wears a kepi, a type of headgear common in the French Army. De Gaulle served as an officer in the French Army and with the Free French Forces and there are numerous photos of him in uniform wearing a kepi. He looks toward the German and U.S. figures with resentment, a sign of the nuclear and burden-sharing problems of the mid-1960s that plagued the Alliance. It is interesting that the character representing the UK, possibly an allusion to John Bull, is toward the bottom of the scrum compared to the U.S., German, and French figures; has no rope in his hand; and appears to have the most worried look of the four main figures.

¹¹⁵ Boris Efimov, RED FILES: Soviet Propaganda Machine - Boris Efimov Interview, 1999, https://www.pbs.org/redfiles/prop/deep/interv/p_int_boris_efimov.htm.

¹¹⁶ Alfred C. Mierzejewski, *Ludwig Erhard: A Biography* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2005), 2, 4–5, 173.

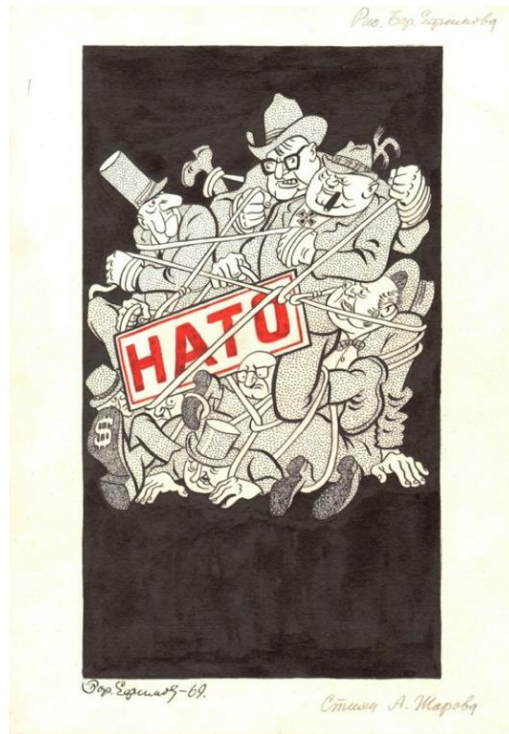


Figure 6. Who is Pulling the Strings in NATO?¹¹⁷

Yuliy Ganf (1898–1973) was an artist who focused on poster illustrations and political cartoons. He is best known for his wide body of work published in *Krokodil*.¹¹⁸ Though the source of the cartoon, Figure 7, does not identify Yuliy Ganf as the artist of the cartoon, this was determined based on the signature in the bottom left corner matching signatures present on two other works attributed to Yuliy Ganf. In this cartoon, Ganf preys upon possible burden-sharing divisions in NATO between European members and the U.S. The cartoon plays on the theme of NATO members being vassals of the U.S. and of the voracious greed of capitalism.

In the cartoon a large U.S. major general is wringing money out of his smaller NATO allies. The next ones up are in a pot with the words “US NATO PARTNERS”

¹¹⁷ Source: Boris Efimov, *Untitled*, 1969, Cartoon, https://regnum.ru/uploads/pictures/news/2017/09/27/regnum_picture_1506540860168484_normal.jpg.

¹¹⁸ Kjell Knudde, “Yuliy Ganf,” Lambiek Comicipedia, January 2, 2020, https://www.lambiek.net/artists/g/ganf_yuliy.htm.

written on the side. They are drawn as caricatures of the nations they represent. To the right a factory with a sign reading “Military Industry USA” belches smoke into the air.



Figure 7. U.S. Wringing Money from NATO Allies.¹¹⁹

The final piece of Soviet propaganda analyzed is a film clip illustrative of the rise of the Soviet Navy from the end of the 1960s onward. The still image, Figure 8, of a Soviet Sverdlov-class (Project 68bis) cruiser was captured from the film to give the reader a visual reference. The subject of the propaganda film is the Soviet Okean-70 naval exercise. According to scholar Commander Bruce Watson, USN (ret.), the Soviet Navy rarely conducted out-of-area exercises from the start of the Cold War until the mid-1950s and when they did, the exercises were short in duration and in numbers of participants. From 1956 on the exercises grew in size and complexity. Okean-70 was the Soviet Navy’s first global exercise, though most of the exercise took place in the North Atlantic and Norwegian Sea and included over 200 surface ships and submarines. The USSR demonstrated all elements of naval warfare including amphibious landings and coordinated

¹¹⁹ Source: Boris Egorov, “How Soviet Propaganda Mocked the U.S., NATO and the CIA,” September 12, 2019, <https://www.rbth.com/history/330953-how-soviet-propaganda-mocked-us>.

strikes by long range bombers.¹²⁰ Okean-70 not only provided training for Soviet forces and the validation of new equipment and tactics, but it had immense propaganda value. The short propaganda video seeks to exploit this. Film footage and photographs of this exercise highlight the might of Soviet naval forces and their ability to project coordinated power worldwide in order to defeat NATO naval forces and defend the Soviet Union.

The film opens by introducing four Soviet sailors or marines, one by one and in close view, as each stand at attention in front of armored vehicles. The film then shows BTR-60 armored personnel carriers (APC) on the move and BTR-50 amphibious APCs rolling into Landing Ship Tanks (LSTs). The tempo begins to increase and next we see Tu-16 strategic bombers flying in formation low over the countryside and bombing an island. Now the action has begun, and it follows with displays of firepower from cruisers and destroyers, and repeated eruptions as the salvos strike the target. Then Soviet Naval Infantry begin assaulting a beach with T-55 main battle tanks, PT-76 amphibious light tanks, and infantry on foot. The film cuts to a scene of cheering naval infantry charging across a field and ends with a scene of a Soviet Naval Ensign extended by a breeze.



Figure 8. Okean-70 Exercise: USSR Cruisers Fire Main Batteries.¹²¹

¹²⁰ Bruce W. Watson, *Red Navy at Sea: Soviet Naval Operations On The High Seas, 1956–1980* (New York: Routledge, 2019), 28–30.

¹²¹ Adapted from "Soviet Marines. Maneuvers 'Ocean-70'," 1970, USSR, video, 2:36, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=y8wG4dYgbC4>.

B. RUSSIAN PROPAGANDA SINCE 2014

1. Russian Views on Propaganda

Russia's leadership, under the control of President Vladimir Vladimirovich Putin, has restored the role of aggressive mass persuasion and state propaganda. The repression of a western-oriented civil society and media in the Russian Federation, especially after Putin's return to power in 2012, cemented this restoration. Similar to the Soviet leadership, state propaganda has a vital role internally and externally. Domestically, the Kremlin utilizes propaganda to rally popular support for Putin and the government, distract the populace from negative events and issues, and marginalize dissenters who themselves had a vibrant social media presence to uncover abuses of power by Putin and especially his well-heeled oligarch cronies. In the foreign sphere, the Kremlin's propaganda favorably depicts Russia and promotes Putin's world view of Eurasianism and his opposition to postmodern Western values in what is, in a way, a revival of the Holy Alliance or Tsarism. The Kremlin also utilizes propaganda to depict NATO as hostile to Russia, and the U.S. and Europe as troubled by internal division, decadence, and the betrayal of traditional values that are grounded in an organic order of orthodoxy, caste, and obedience. Given Putin's role and power in Russia over the last 20 years, it is important to recognize that his experiences in the Soviet Union surely influenced him in an openly authoritarian posture and resulted in the widespread usage of propaganda by the Kremlin especially since 2012.

Putin was born in 1952 in Leningrad amid the immediate postwar reality of the besieged northern European metropole. Putin joined the KGB in 1975, where he served for approximately 15 years and ultimately witnessed the collapse of the USSR.¹²² He spent his early KGB career during the decline of the Brezhnev era, which as noted earlier, was a period of torpor in Russia. During this period the Soviets devoted increasing resources to the making of war and efforts to both domestic and foreign propaganda as the Cold War revived at the end of the 1970s. It was also a period, especially in the late 1970s and into the 1980s, of the intense usage of active measures against the West as part of this revival

¹²² *Encyclopaedia Britannica Online*, s.v. "Vladimir Putin Biography," January 10, 2020, <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Vladimir-Putin>.

of conflict associated with upheaval in Poland, the INF chapter and the Afghan campaign. Thus, Putin's formative years, personally and professionally, were likely heavily influenced by propaganda he experienced as well as techniques he was taught by the KGB. It is unlikely Putin has forgotten these experiences or his KGB training of indoctrination as the sword of the CPSU and its codex of service in ideological conflict across all domains of warfare and statecraft. At a December 2005 social event for the Federal Security Service of the Russian Federation (FSB), the domestic successor to the KGB and of which Putin had served as the director, Putin told guests, "there is no such thing as a former KGB man."¹²³ Putin has put these formative experiences to use in unleashing propaganda domestically and internationally to support his policies and views.

Domestically, propaganda is viewed as useful to the Kremlin because it has helped spread the Kremlin's mass persuasion particularly when it comes to culture which cannot at any time be separated from ideology and nationalism. The application of propaganda to spread Putin's version of a kind of culture with its roots in organic conservatism of the 19th century as well as the Russian version of fascism matters because culture plays an important role in Putin's grip on power. The Kremlin has used it to consolidate support for Putin and unify society around shared values that are anti-American, anti-EU, anti-NATO, and opposed to the regime in Kiev as well. In the early 2000s, the Kremlin encouraged nostalgia for the culture of the Soviet past whereas more recently conservative culture and values were promoted. As professors Marlene Laruelle and Jean Radvanyi write the Kremlin utilized a wave of "cultural nostalgia for the Brezhnev era" to promote unity and national sentiment.¹²⁴ The 2011–2012 protests against Putin and Medvedev by liberal elements of the population caused the Putin administration to pivot towards conservatism, nationalism and the use of culture as a weapon against those with the western orientation—an old tactic. Laruelle and Radvanyi note that the Kremlin saw this pivot as a means to

¹²³ Quoted in Anna Nemtsova, "A Chill in the Moscow Air," *Newsweek*, February 5, 2006, <https://www.newsweek.com/chill-moscow-air-113415>.

¹²⁴ Marlene Laruelle and Jean Radvanyi, *Understanding Russia: The Challenges of Transformation* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2019), 55.

sideline the liberal middle classes that formed the core of the protestors while appealing to the conservative majority of Russians. The Kremlin began to denounce liberal ideas while promoting the Orthodox Church and conservative values.¹²⁵ Throughout this time Putin also turned to nationalism and xenophobia as additional tools to rally Russians together to support him. Lipman discusses how during the annexation of Crimea “jingoistic propaganda” was widespread on state media and fueled nationalism which helped to boost Putin’s approval rating to record levels.¹²⁶ The Great Patriotic War and the memorialization of it are important parts of Putin’s efforts to unify the populace and justify the Putin regime’s continued hold on power. According to Dr. Maria Domańska, the Kremlin uses the myth of the Great Patriotic War to legitimize its foreign interventions, great-power ambitions, and the authoritarian regime itself.¹²⁷ Professor Elizabeth Wood provides another view, that promoting Russia’s role in the Second World War serves to highlight the unity of the nation, gives Russia legitimacy and global status, and links Putin to this mythic event, thus elevating him to hero status.¹²⁸ The Putin administration uses domestic propaganda to convey culture, nationalism, and xenophobia in order to create unity and promote a civil society that is fully supportive of the Kremlin.

The Kremlin views propaganda used in the foreign sphere that advances the orthodoxy and tradition agenda in, say, Western and Central Europe to say nothing of the extreme right in the U.S. as beneficial. In this way Russia aims to distract the U.S., divide NATO and European Union member states, and undermine governments of states in its near abroad. Propaganda is also useful in rallying ethnic Russians living in Europe, especially in states bordering Russia or even in Germany. For example, with a nod to the

¹²⁵ Laruelle and Radvanyi, 60–61.

¹²⁶ Maria Lipman, “The Media,” in *Putin’s Russia: Past Imperfect, Future Uncertain*, ed. Stephen K. Wegren, 7th ed. (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2019), 122.

¹²⁷ Maria Domańska, “The Myth of the Great Patriotic War as a Tool of the Kremlin’s Great Power Policy,” *Centre for Eastern Studies (OSW) Commentary*, no. 316 (December 31, 2019): 1–2.

¹²⁸ Elizabeth A. Wood, “Performing Memory: Vladimir Putin and the Celebration of World War II in Russia,” *The Soviet and Post-Soviet Review* 38, no. 2 (2011): 174, 198, <https://doi.org/10.1163/187633211X591175>.

pan Slavic ideals of the 19th century, Russia perpetuates the idea that it is the defender of ethnic Russians and that only Russia can truly ensure their security. The Kremlin has used this old new concept of revanchism in locations such as the Crimea to justify aggression. Putin has even pledged to defend ethnic Russians living abroad with any means necessary. In July 2014, he made this clear to a conference of Russian Federation ambassadors and permanent representatives when he said, “our country will continue to actively defend the rights of Russians, our compatriots abroad, using the entire range of available means.”¹²⁹ Putin has continued to reiterate this as recently as 2018.¹³⁰

2. How Russia has Used Propaganda against NATO

Russia has used propaganda across the spectrum from white via grey to black. This fact mirrors the Soviet Union’s employment of all types of propaganda. Also similar to the Soviet methods, is that Russia utilizes active measures. Lastly, though from the available research the lines of authority and responsibility for propaganda are less clear than in the Soviet Union, it is apparent that Putin and his associates retain control over the Russian propaganda apparatus.

In the Russian spectrum of propaganda, the methods adhere to similar divisions though new actors have taken the place of or augmented those used by the Soviets. Characterizing the type of propaganda (white, grey, or black) still is based on how identifiable the source of the message is as well as how truthful it is. Today, white propaganda originates from sources such as Sputnik International, part of the Russian state media conglomerate Rossiya Segodnya or Russia Today. Rossiya Segodnya was founded with the absorption of the successors to Radio Moscow and to APN by a decree of Putin in

¹²⁹ Vladimir Putin, “Opening Remarks” (Speech, Conference of Russian Ambassadors and Permanent Representatives, Moscow, July 1, 2014), <http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/46131>.

¹³⁰ “Russia Will ‘Vigorously Defend’ Rights of Compatriots Abroad, Putin Says,” *The Moscow Times*, October 31, 2018, <https://www.themoscowtimes.com/2018/10/31/russia-will-vigorously-defend-rights-compatriots-abroad-putin-says-a63362>.

December 2013.¹³¹ Another method for spreading white propaganda is through TASS, rebranded in 2014 simply to the acronym, which continues to operate as a state news agency publishing thousands of articles and photographs annually along with organizing press conferences and other events.¹³² The methods of grey and black propaganda continue in the Soviet tradition of using front groups (non-governmental organizations, civil society organizations, etc.) and the secret services, but thanks to new communication technologies, grey and black propaganda is also spread via extremist and conspiracy websites and blogs along with social media platforms. A 2018 RAND Corporation report on Russian propaganda on social media explains how black propaganda messaging is generated and then migrates to grey propaganda and finally to white propaganda. Then the different types utilize “information” or “facts” shared by another to amplify the propaganda.¹³³ Scholars Christopher Paul and Miriam Matthews contend that though Russian propaganda uses Soviet-era methods, there are distinctive features that are new. They write that Russia has embraced new communications technology with special verve and great cunning. This technology enables the quick and continuous dissemination of partially true (or even false) propaganda. The messaging is reinforced by the use of many channels or communication paths and a large volume or amount.¹³⁴ In addition, this propaganda, like in the Soviet era, works in conjunction with active measures to influence populations and governments in countries of importance to Russia.

¹³¹ “Voice of Russia — Former ‘Radio Moscow’ — to End Shortwave Broadcasts,” The National Association for Amateur Radio, December 9, 2013, <http://www.arrl.org/news/voice-of-russia-former-radio-moscow-to-end-shortwave-broadcasts>; Allan Loudell, “The End of an Era in International Shortwave Broadcasting: Voice of Russia (Former Radio Moscow) to Leave Shortwave by Year’s End,” WDEL 101.7FM, August 29, 2013, https://www.wdel.com/blogs/eclectic-hobbies/the-end-of-an-era-in-international-shortwave-broadcasting-voice/article_96e98b1d-9776-5bdb-a3e8-96d9f50cd8eb.html; Michael Pizzi, “Putin Dissolves RIA Novosti News Agency,” Al Jazeera America, December 9, 2013, <http://america.aljazeera.com/articles/2013/12/9/putin-dissolves-rianovostinewsagency.html>; “About Us,” Sputnik, accessed September 8, 2019, <https://sputniknews.com/docs/about/index.html>.

¹³² “About TASS,” TASS, accessed September 8, 2019, <https://tass.com/today>.

¹³³ Helmus et al., *Russian Social Media Influence*, 11–13.

¹³⁴ Paul and Matthews, *The Russian ‘Firehose of Falsehood’ Propaganda Model*, 1–2.

This resurgence in the use of covert practices falling under the umbrella phrase of active measures has not gone unnoticed by researchers the world over. Numerous scholars have noted that Russia continues to employ methods that very much resemble the Soviet-era active measures. Russia expert Keir Giles writes that “Russia has revitalized...the Soviet KGB...programme of ‘active measures’.”¹³⁵ Scholar Steve Abrams notes that Russia’s use of active measures is not new and instead a “continuation of...Soviet policy, itself a reflection of Imperial Russian methods.”¹³⁶ Though not the focus of this paper, the Russian use of active measures such as forgeries or assassinations and the similarities and differences to the active measures of the Soviet-era are an important area for further study.

The apparatus that the Kremlin uses to generate or update, authorize, and spread propaganda stretches from Putin through his loyalists and then down to state and private entities. Since 2000, Putin’s actions and those of his associates in the realms of Russian politics, the economy, and society have ensured Putin’s absolute control of Russia. Of particular importance are the combination of *sistema* and the *siloviki* that enable Putin’s control and his ability to direct the propaganda apparatus.

Putin uses rent-seeking, corruption, and *sistema*—a network of connections as described by Alena V. Ledeneva—to wed elites in a perverse public-private partnership to Putin’s administration. This alliance relies on informal control and loose property rights while generating massive rewards for those who play by Putin’s rules. Ledeneva argues that *sistema* in Putin’s Russia provides a lack of transparency that facilitates rent seeking and encourages corrupt ties between public and private elites.¹³⁷ *Sistema* is not new to Russia or to Putin. Boris Grozovsky and Maxim Trudolyubov note that in St. Petersburg Putin learned the value of weak property rights, patronage, and cooperation with the

¹³⁵ Keir Giles, “Russia’s ‘New’ Tools for Confronting the West: Continuity and Innovation in Moscow’s Exercise of Power” (London, UK: Chatham House, March 2016), 41, <https://www.chathamhouse.org/publication/russias-new-tools-confronting-west>.

¹³⁶ Abrams, “Beyond Propaganda,” 16.

¹³⁷ Alena V. Ledeneva, “Russia’s Practical Norms and Informal Governance: The Origins of Endemic Corruption,” *Social Research* 80, no. 4 (Winter 2013): 1149, 1151.

siloviki.¹³⁸ Those who take part in Putin's *sistema* have profited handsomely. Remington writes of the compensation of top managers in key industries as well as that of government officials.¹³⁹ Much of this comes from rent-seeking that the Kremlin protects. Another benefit of informal control and weak property rights is the ability for connected elites to illegally obtain property of those not connected. As scholar Louise Shelley relates, corporate raiding is a common practice in Russia where powerful elites use their connections to Putin's administration to turn the instruments of the state against individuals in order to force them into selling their property way below market value.¹⁴⁰ Putin, with control of the state, utilizes *sistema* and corruption combined with the incentive of vast wealth to bind elites to him.

The second enabler of Putin's control is composed of the *siloviki* or security officers. These are individuals who have worked for one of Russia's or the USSR's security agencies. Since leaving this work, though some could still be on active service, they have gone into business in Russia or work for the Putin administration. Scholar Andrei Illarionov describes the *siloviki* as having the attitude, motivation, and training to use force without reservation against individuals. In addition, they have a powerful allegiance to the *siloviki* group and respect a hierarchy with service in the KGB or FSB putting one at the top. Lastly, Illarionov notes that the *siloviki* occupy a significant percentage of the positions of power in the Russian public and private sectors and that this coincided with Putin's ascent to power.¹⁴¹ The *siloviki* who, like Putin, grew up in the Soviet Union and were trained by its security agencies would be well versed in propaganda and active measures and a kind

¹³⁸ Boris Grozovski and Maxim Trudolyubov, "Capitalism the Kremlin Way," *The Russia File: A Blog of the Kennan Institute* (blog), September 13, 2018, <https://www.wilsoncenter.org/blog-post/capitalism-the-kremlin-way>.

¹³⁹ Thomas F. Remington, "Economic Inequality and Social Policy," in *Putin's Russia: Past Imperfect, Future Uncertain*, ed. Stephen K. Wegren, 7th ed. (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2019), 136–37.

¹⁴⁰ Louise Shelley, "Crime and Corruption," in *Putin's Russia: Past Imperfect, Future Uncertain*, ed. Stephen K. Wegren, 7th ed. (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2019), 174–75.

¹⁴¹ Andrei Illarionov, "Reading Russia: The Siloviki in Charge," *Journal of Democracy* 20, no. 2 (April 2009): 69–71.

of politics that is anti-civil and suffused with coercion, naked power and aggression against the weak and those with a different mind.

Sistema and the *siloviki* facilitate Putin's control of the propaganda apparatus, but the bureaucracy uses both written and oral methods for communicating what propaganda messages should be spread and what news items should be ignored or downplayed. The European External Action Service's East StratCom Task Force's flagship project, EUvsDisinfo, reports that the Kremlin uses oral instructions known as a *temnik*. These instructions are passed down to subordinates from Kremlin officials in briefings and eventually they reach the editors of the Russian media and supervisors of other communications outlets. The *temnik* provide guidance on the themes that should be focused on and those that should be ignored. Thus, the intent of the Kremlin is conveyed to the lowest levels, with little written record, while providing the editors and workers with some creative space to produce propaganda to fit the Kremlin's messaging.¹⁴² Another piece describes documents that outline the subjects that are off limits to Russian media.¹⁴³ A 2015 *TIME* piece by reporter Simon Shuster recounts that Margarita Simonyan, the editor in chief of the RT network and of Rossiya Segodnya, the state media conglomerate, has a telephone on her desk that provides a direct, secure connection to the Kremlin.¹⁴⁴ It is clear that the Kremlin uses multiple methods to ensure that its propaganda apparatus conveys the desired themes and in a coordinated manner while attempting to minimize exposure of these methods of control.

3. The Tools Used by Russia to Disseminate Anti-NATO Propaganda

In the category of means of propaganda, there are some differences from those of the Soviet era. One is that unlike the Soviet state, Russia did not have the same control over domestic media in the 1990s and early 2000s which became liberalized and gave rise to

¹⁴² "Temnik - the Kremlin's Route to Media Control," EUvsDisinfo, East Stratcom Task Force, March 30, 2017, <https://euvsdisinfo.eu/temnik-the-kremlins-route-to-media-control/>.

¹⁴³ "'We Don't Promote the English Queen's Anniversary!!!'", EUvsDisinfo, East Stratcom Task Force, June 21, 2017, <https://euvsdisinfo.eu/we-dont-promote-the-english-queens-anniversary/>.

¹⁴⁴ Simon Shuster, "Inside Putin's Media Machine," *TIME*, March 5, 2015, <https://time.com/rt-putin/>.

civil society as in the West, even if not in power or scope. But this fact has significantly changed in the last 15 years as the Russian state has exerted control over domestic media and succeeded in penetrating Western society. The signal difference from the Soviet era is the emergence of new communications technologies since the collapse of the USSR with some of these such as Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram gaining global popularity only in the early 2010s. Russia has incorporated these new means into its propaganda spewing machine and they are a critical, new way for Russia to spread its messaging on a scale impossible to imagine at the time of the Khrushchev–Nixon debate on colored television in July 1959.

Since Putin’s rise to power the Kremlin has used various means to obtain editorial control over Russian media with the objective of silencing dissent and promoting Putin’s government. The collapse of the USSR and the rapid privatization of the early 1990s affected the Russian media sector. Private media companies emerged and provided an alternative to state-controlled media. Scholar Maria Lipman discusses the rise of NTV, the first private television network, and notes the immense popularity of its programming including *Kukly* and *Itogi*. The success of NTV served as an example that other financial tycoons emulated by investing in the Russian media sector.¹⁴⁵ By the 1999–2000 election cycle the state no longer had a monopoly on the message.

After his election, Putin took steps to reverse this as he recognized the importance of mass media in influencing the populace and desired to control the messaging. Author David Hoffman illustrates this desire by recounting an incident where Putin said he wanted to personally run ORT now known as Channel One.¹⁴⁶ The Kremlin achieved control of the mass media by manipulating the legal system and backing state-owned enterprises in takeovers of privately controlled media outlets. Scholar Vladimir Gel’man offers in his

¹⁴⁵ Lipman, “The Media,” 110–11.

¹⁴⁶ David E. Hoffman, *The Oligarchs: Wealth and Power in the New Russia* (New York: Public Affairs, 2011), 488.

book examples of the Kremlin's tactics.¹⁴⁷ Lipman notes that the Kremlin sabotaged two attempts to launch privately owned television networks and within a couple years following Putin's election, it had cemented control of the three major TV networks.¹⁴⁸ This control provides the Kremlin with an echo chamber where the majority of the population is exposed to news friendly to Putin and his government while only highlighting negative news such as corruption or problems in Russia when it is beneficial to the Kremlin. At the same time the populace is kept entertained with TV shows that include messaging in line with the Kremlin's outlook on Russian values.

Broadcast media is a major means for the Kremlin to spread its propaganda. Along with legacy radio and television, communications technologies such as satellite television and the internet are used by Russia. Two of the main entities are RT, formerly Russia Today, and Sputnik News. The RT news network was formed in 2005 with a single internationally broadcast 24/7 news channel. Its motto is "Question More." Scholar Marcel van Herpen details that the Kremlin initially invested \$23 million to start RT along with a budget of \$47 million; by 2011 the budget had grown to \$380 million. RT, with a global workforce of 1,200, is larger than Fox News.¹⁴⁹ From that single news channel RT now has eight TV channels broadcasting 24/7 as well as multiple digital platforms. The news channels are available in Russian, English, Spanish, Arabic, and French, along with German online. Broadcasts are available in over 100 countries. RT claims it garners 100 million viewers a week across 47 countries, its websites receive 175 million monthly visits, and that on YouTube it is the top TV news network with over 10 billion views total across its channels.¹⁵⁰ RT claims to be an autonomous news organization. However, it does

¹⁴⁷ Vladimir Gel'man, *Authoritarian Russia Analyzing Post-Soviet Regime Changes*, Pitt Series in Russian and East European Studies (Pittsburgh, PA: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2015), 79–80.

¹⁴⁸ Lipman, "The Media," 113.

¹⁴⁹ Marcel van Herpen, *Putin's Propaganda Machine* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2016), loc. 1765 of 8957, Kindle.

¹⁵⁰ "About RT," RT, accessed September 10, 2019, <https://www.rt.com/about-us/>; "Distribution," RT, accessed September 10, 2019, <https://www.rt.com/about-us/distribution/>.

acknowledge that it receives public funding from the Russian government and its editor in chief Margarita Simonyan also fills that role at Rossiya Segodnya.

Sputnik News, part of Rossiya Segodnya, shares propaganda via websites, social media platforms, and mobile apps. It also continues the legacy of Radio Moscow and APN with its radio broadcasts and newswire services. Sputnik boasts that its radio programming amounts to over 800 hours a day via websites, FM and digital audio broadcasts.¹⁵¹ The newswire service provides to subscribers over 1,500 pieces daily in English, Chinese, Spanish, and Arabic while the photo service adds 700 images a day in addition to Sputnik's extensive image archive.¹⁵² Its motto is "Telling the Untold." Similar to TASS and APN and the anonymous propaganda of the Soviet era, many RT and Sputnik articles today lack author bylines.

Print publications (newspapers, paid supplements, etc.) continue to be a means for Russia to spread propaganda. TASS, the newswire agency, has over 2,000 employees spread across offices in the Russian Federation and 63 branches in 60 countries. Subscribers to TASS have access to 1,500 news pieces and over 500 images and videos a day.¹⁵³ Scholar Kohei Watanabe finds that TASS coverage of the crisis in Ukraine (2013–2014) had a clear bias to covering themes and news consistent with those favored by the Kremlin.¹⁵⁴ Herpen points out that a website, "Russia beyond the Headlines" was launched in 2007 by *Rossiyskaya Gazeta*, the official gazette of the Russian government. This site oversaw the publication of paid newspaper supplements. These eight-page supplements appeared monthly in major Western newspapers.¹⁵⁵ In 2017, the website was transferred

¹⁵¹ Sputnik, "About Us."

¹⁵² "Products and Services - Sputnik International," Sputnik, accessed September 13, 2019, <https://sputniknews.com/docs/products/index.html>.

¹⁵³ TASS, "About TASS."

¹⁵⁴ Kohei Watanabe, "Measuring News Bias: Russia's Official News Agency ITAR-TASS' Coverage of the Ukraine Crisis," *European Journal of Communication* 32, no. 3 (June 2017): 20–21, <https://doi.org/10.1177/0267323117695735>.

¹⁵⁵ Herpen, *Putin's Propaganda Machine*, loc. 1845 of 8957, Kindle.

to the parent company for RT, the printed supplements ceased, and the title was shorted to Russia Beyond.¹⁵⁶ It advertises itself as a guide to Russian culture, travel, business, and more.¹⁵⁷

Communications via social media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, and Instagram factor heavily into Russian propaganda efforts. They are a primary means of spreading grey and black propaganda. As a 2018 RAND Corporation report concludes, Russia coordinates its broadcast, print, and web news propaganda efforts with its social media presence.¹⁵⁸

Film, like in the USSR, continues to be an important means of propaganda. Recent works such as *The Brest Fortress* (2010), *Battle for Sevastopol* (2015), *Panfilov's 28 Men* (2016), *T-34* (2019), and *The Balkan Line* (2019) work to further spread propaganda themes regarding the Great Patriotic War or NATO. Some of these works are based on historical events whereas others claim to be but are actually fabricated myths dating back to the Soviet era.¹⁵⁹ These films disseminate the propaganda domestically but are also available globally via internet entertainment streaming services. These services provide a greater reach and audience for Russian films than would have been available to the Soviet propaganda apparatus.

Military parades, like in Soviet times, play a propaganda role in conveying the martial power of the Russian Federation. In addition, as Putin has placed greater emphasis on celebrating the Soviet sacrifice and victory in the Second World War the military parades have placed renewed focus on it. In January 2019, Russia received a shipment of functioning T-34 tanks from Laos that will be incorporated into future Second World War

¹⁵⁶ "Russia Beyond the Headlines Transferred to Managing Company RT Trans. Google Translate," RBC, January 9, 2017, https://www.rbc.ru/technology_and_media/09/01/2017/587399da9a7947c7cccd70f3.

¹⁵⁷ "About Us," Russia Beyond, January 1, 2017, <https://www.rbth.com/about>.

¹⁵⁸ Helmus et al., *Russian Social Media Influence*, 25–26.

¹⁵⁹ Harry Bone, "Putin Backs WW2 Myth in New Russian Film," BBC News, October 11, 2016, sec. Europe, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-37595972>.

victory commemorations.¹⁶⁰ In November 2019, the Kremlin held a military parade to re-enact the defense of Moscow in 1941.¹⁶¹

4. Russia's Views of NATO

The Kremlin's positions regarding the EU and NATO are rooted in Russian policymakers' Hobbesian view of international relations, their belief in Russia's great power status, and emotional responses that guide statecraft to perceived slights. As Lo writes, Russian leaders view the world as a zero-sum game where the strong do what they want and the weak suffer. In this dangerous world hard power matters more than soft power though Russia does utilize the latter in terms of political, economic, and information resources as leverage to achieve its objectives. Lastly, Russian leaders see the international system dominated by major powers not international institutions.¹⁶² Lo argues that Kremlin policymakers view Russia as a great power that is resuming its rightful place among the leading nations of the world.¹⁶³ This is evidenced in then-President Medvedev's comments in 2008 where he described a unipolar world as unacceptable, advocated for a multi-polar system, and asserted that Russia has its own sphere of influence.¹⁶⁴ More recently, in 2018, President Putin in his annual address to the Russian Federal Assembly referred to Russia as ranking "among the world's leading nations."¹⁶⁵ On an emotional level, as Lo writes, Russia reacts negatively and defensively to its loss of control and influence over Central and Eastern European states that it had before the collapse of the

¹⁶⁰ Ivan Nechepurenko, "Russia Is Running Low on World War II Soviet Tanks. It Found Help in Laos," *The New York Times*, January 10, 2019, sec. World, <https://www.nytimes.com/2019/01/10/world/europe/russia-t-34-tanks.html>.

¹⁶¹ "Russia Re-Enacts Legendary World War II Parade in Moscow," Associated Press News, November 7, 2019, <https://apnews.com/0cfca38f5f204b638dc8a8bc89824b4d>.

¹⁶² Lo, *Russia and the New World Disorder*, 40–42.

¹⁶³ Lo, 47–48.

¹⁶⁴ Andrew E. Kramer, "Russia Claims Its Sphere of Influence in the World," *The New York Times*, August 31, 2008, sec. World, <https://www.nytimes.com/2008/09/01/world/europe/01russia.html>.

¹⁶⁵ Vladimir Putin, "Presidential Address to the Federal Assembly" (Speech, Moscow, March 1, 2018), <http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/56957>.

USSR.¹⁶⁶ This emotional response also stems from the perceived humiliation of Russia by the West during the 1990s and early 2000s.¹⁶⁷ In President Putin's aforementioned 2018 speech there is a strong sense of this emotion as he describes new strategic weapons developed in response to the U.S. ignoring Russia's concerns over missile defense systems. He states that, "nobody really wanted to talk to us about the core of the problem, and nobody wanted to listen to us. So listen now."¹⁶⁸

For the Kremlin, NATO is not a direct military threat, but an embodiment of a unipolar world that excludes Russia and is inimical to Russia's preferred international system. Lo writes that Russia sees NATO in the context of a broader danger to "Russia's sovereignty, its geopolitical position, and the stability of the Putin system itself."¹⁶⁹ The main issue is that NATO can act without Russian consent. Lo and Allison agree in their observation that for Putin the only legitimate authorization of the use of force comes not from NATO or the EU, but from the UN Security Council where Russia has the right of veto.¹⁷⁰ Russia's view of NATO is also influenced by the humiliation narrative and the belief that NATO cannot be trusted. The Russian government maintains that NATO promised the Soviets at the end of the Cold War not to expand into Central and Eastern Europe.¹⁷¹ The NATO expansion begun in 1999, NATO's bombing campaign in the Kosovo War without a UN mandate, and NATO's refusal to consider Russia's proposal for a pan-European ballistic missile defense system all provided Russia with evidence that NATO was disingenuous and did not respect a weakened Russia. Laruelle and Radvanyi

¹⁶⁶ Lo, *Russia and the New World Disorder*, 103.

¹⁶⁷ Lo, 20.

¹⁶⁸ Vladimir Putin, "Presidential Address to the Federal Assembly."

¹⁶⁹ Lo, *Russia and the New World Disorder*, 89.

¹⁷⁰ Lo, 95; Roy Allison, *Russia, the West, and Military Intervention* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 173.

¹⁷¹ Svetlana Savranskaya and Tom Blanton, "NATO Expansion: What Gorbachev Heard," National Security Archive, December 12, 2017, <https://nsarchive.gwu.edu/briefing-book/russia-programs/2017-12-12/nato-expansion-what-gorbachev-heard-western-leaders-early>.

point out that Russia saw NATO's expansion toward Russia "as one of a succession of humiliations made possible by the country's temporary weakness."¹⁷² Lo provides additional insight into the Russia outlook when he writes that a characteristic of a great power is that it is "dominant player" in its near abroad.¹⁷³ Thus, it is not surprising that Russia would react strongly to perceived interference in its sphere of influence by the West via NATO expansion.

5. Russia's Goals for Anti-NATO Propaganda

The Russian aims of anti-NATO propaganda are similar to those of the Soviets. Through its propaganda Russia seeks to weaken public support for NATO, divide the NATO Alliance, enable Russian policies, and cast Russia in a positive light. There are the additional goals of distracting the U.S. and creating more favorable conditions in Russia's near abroad (i.e., former Soviet republics and Warsaw Pact nations that the Soviets had occupied or effectively controlled).

6. Common Themes in Russia's Anti-NATO Propaganda

The themes in Russian anti-NATO propaganda continue some of the Soviet messaging while introducing new ones. Like in Soviet anti-NATO propaganda, Russian propaganda casts NATO as an offensive and aggressive alliance that at a minimum condones fascism, if not directly supports it. Other themes borrowed from the Soviets include portraying NATO as the vassal of a warmongering U.S. and showing Russia as acting in self-defense and in the interests of peace. One new theme focuses on portraying NATO as an untrustworthy partner for reneging on an alleged promise not to expand into Central and Eastern Europe. Russia continues to claim that NATO made such a commitment to Soviet leadership at the end of Cold War. Another new theme showcases Russia as the only willing protector of ethnic Russians everywhere.

¹⁷² Laruelle and Radvanyi, *Understanding Russia*, 95.

¹⁷³ Lo, *Russia and the New World Disorder*, 48.

7. Russian Visual Propaganda Analysis

This section analyzes a number of pieces of anti-NATO propaganda utilized by the Russian Federation to further its agenda. The anti-NATO propaganda generated by the Russian Federation is the successor to that created by the Soviet Union during the Cold War. In Russian propaganda targeting NATO the message may contain different individuals, different topics, and different means of dissemination, yet its connection to propaganda of the Soviet era is apparent. Russia's strong tradition of using the fine arts in the service of propaganda continues. It is displayed in the following cartoons/memes and drawings aimed at NATO and produced for Russian newspapers, magazines, and internet media. In addition, Russian propaganda photographs and videos play an important role and are widely circulated in Russian internet newspapers and broadcasts and in turn throughout the world. A couple of examples are discussed in this section.

Vitaliy Podvitsky (1972–) is a Russian illustrator and cartoonist. According to Sputnik and Podvitsky's website, he has worked in journalism for more than 25 years and has created over 10,000 illustrations and cartoons. His work is published regularly by RIA-Novosti and Sputnik, both part of Russian state media conglomerate Rossiya Segodnya.¹⁷⁴

In 2016 three of Podvitsky's cartoons focused on NATO. The first cartoon, Figure 9, appeared on April 19, 2016, on Ria.ru and again on June 30, 2016, on a Russian operated website, Military Review or TopWar.ru. According to researcher Fatima Tlis, TopWar.ru website is controlled by the Ministry of Defense of the Russian Federation and is part of a public relations program.¹⁷⁵ Via a reverse image search, it can also be found on multiple other webpages, many of which support Russian views. The June 30, 2016, publication accompanied an article describing NATO exercises around Poland, the Baltic countries, and Baltic Sea. It emphasizes the large number of forces involved, claims that NATO has

¹⁷⁴ "Vitaliy Podvitski," Sputnik, 2019, https://mundo.sputniknews.com/authors/podvitski_vitaly/; Vitaliy Podvitsky, "About myself," SuperCartoon, 2019, <https://supercartoon.ru/o-ce6e/>.

¹⁷⁵ Fatima Tlis, "16 Million British Apologies—Trend of the Week in Russia's Domestic Propaganda," Polygraph, May 1, 2018, <https://www.polygraph.info/a/russian-disinfo-analyses-kremlin-control-internet/29202744.html>.

a habit of scaring Europeans with talk of an exaggerated Russian threat, states that there were multiple equipment problems and accidents, and highlights local protests against the NATO exercises.¹⁷⁶

The cartoon, targeted toward a Russian/Russian friendly audience, seeks to reinforce in the viewer's mind that NATO is expansive and aggressive while associating Russia with non-interference in other's affairs though there are clear reminders of Russia's power. In Figure 9, a bear, representing Russia, was relaxing and reading a newspaper perhaps in its garden, but now has leaned forward and is warily looking west towards Europe. It is concerned with NATO, represented as an aggressive and invasive ivy with dark blue leaves that has spread across Europe and is beginning to encircle the flanks of Russia's "garden." This element supports the Kremlin's narrative that NATO broke a commitment not to expand NATO to former Warsaw Pact states and that NATO's goal is to encircle Russia. Behind the bear sits a compost heap that contains the remains of previous invasive ivy vines that the bear has chopped off with its sharp hoe. These severed vines call to mind great Russian victories following invasions of Russia. They are the defeat of Nazi Germany as portrayed by a vine with leaves with a swastika and "1945" on them; the defeat of Napoleonic France as evidenced by a vine with "1812" on it; the vine with "1709" on it recalls the decisive victory over the Swedish Empire at the Battle of Poltava; the tactical victory at the Battle of Moscow over forces of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth as shown by the "1612" and what appears to be a helm of a Polish Hussar; and lastly the famous Battle on the Ice, the victory of Prince Alexander Nevsky and his forces over Teutonic knights as indicated by the "1242" and the horned helm.

¹⁷⁶ Valery Ross, "'Dragoon Campaign' and Other Games," *Military Review*, June 30, 2016, <https://en.topwar.ru/97347-dragunskiy-pohod-i-drugie-igry.html>.



Figure 9. Russian Bear Warily Watches NATO's Encircling Vines.¹⁷⁷

One of Podvitsky's cartoons, Figure 10, aimed at the 2016 NATO Warsaw Summit appeared on Sputnik on July 8, 2016. It accompanies a short body of text that claims NATO is using the Warsaw Summit to focus on an imaginary Russian threat. Further the text states that NATO is the cause of instability in Europe, citing a Turkish general, and that European states would prefer to arm themselves than contribute more to the Alliance due to a lack of faith in NATO.¹⁷⁸ Using a Google reverse image search, the cartoon can also be found on multiple other webpages, again many of them promoting Russian views. The cartoon's themes are of a bellicose NATO, a peaceful Russia, and that NATO does not serve European interests. The cartoon is aimed at a wide audience based on its use of English in the text and distribution via the internet.

¹⁷⁷ Source: Vitaly Podvitsky, *Untitled*, April 2016, Cartoon, <https://www.memri.org/sites/default/files/image/28142.jpg>.

¹⁷⁸ "Threat Assessment," Sputnik, July 8, 2016, <https://sputniknews.com/cartoons/201607081042662339-warsaw-nato-summit-cartoon/>.



Figure 10. NATO Ignores the True Threats to Europe.¹⁷⁹

The scene is a seascape with three individuals struggling in the water. They are depicted encircled by three sharks with another in pursuit. The sharks symbolize threats to Europeans. The threats as indicated by text on the dorsal fin or right next to it are: “CRISIS,” “TERRORISM,” “MIGRANTS,” and “BREXIT.” They are appealing to a NATO general or admiral for rescue. He stands safely above them on his ship and instead of rendering aid lectures them about Russia with a speech balloon in the reading: “NO, NO, NO! THIS IS YOUR REAL THREAT!” The sail on the mast depicts a weird sea creature with the body and tentacles of an octopus, the claws of a lobster or crab, horns, and a fearsome maw. It evokes the fantastical sea beasts that mariners in centuries past claimed inhabited the oceans.

The message is clear: that NATO (the officer) is out of touch with Europeans (the adrift people) and ignores the real security concerns (the sharks). NATO does not want to address the real threats and instead wants to focus on the imagined threat of Russia (the

¹⁷⁹ Source: Vitaly Podvitsky, *Untitled*, July 2016, Cartoon, <https://cdn2.img.sputniknews.com/images/104266/23/1042662363.jpg>.

mythical sea monster). Further, it implies that Europeans should not trust NATO to aid them when in distress and need to look elsewhere to address their security concerns.

The second Podvitsky cartoon, Figure 11, published on July 14, 2016, accompanied a Military Review (TopWar.ru) article that claims the NATO Warsaw Summit spread lies about Russia, and similar rhetoric was heard from Hitler before the Nazi German invasion of Russia. The author claims the U.S. is the puppeteer controlling all this and compares numerous officials in Poland and Ukraine to fascists.¹⁸⁰ Though the article is available in English, given the Russian language in the speech bubbles the target audience is Russian speaking. Similar to the two previous images, a Google reverse image search uncovers this cartoon on many Russian language webpages as well as English language blogs espousing Russian views. The cartoon carries on the visual theme of Soviet propaganda, that NATO is a fascist organization and heir to the Hitlerites.



Figure 11. NATO Embodies the Nazi German Past.¹⁸¹

¹⁸⁰ Victor Kamenev, "Our Grandfathers Heard It All. From Hitler," Military Review, July 14, 2016, <https://en.topwar.ru/98017-nashi-dedy-vse-eto-slyshali-ot-gitlera.html>.

¹⁸¹ Source: Vitaly Podvitsky, *Untitled*, July 2016, Cartoon, https://topwar.ru/uploads/posts/2016-07/1468465272_1468164544_vo-437.jpg.

The cartoon depicts NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg speaking at a podium to an audience. He appears to be waving to the crowd with a raised right arm. However, what appears to be an innocent gesture is made much more sinister by the apparition of Hitler on Stoltenberg's left and to his rear. Hitler with an intense look is giving the *Hiltergruß* salute. Now Stoltenberg's gesture takes on a whole new meaning. It is now noticeable that Stoltenberg is dressed similar to Hitler with the same color suit, shirt, and tie. Where Hitler is drawn with an intense and maniacal gaze Stoltenberg appears goofier with his eyes crossed. This might fit with the article that describes Stoltenberg as a puppet of his American deputy. Two of the audience members are talking and one asks, "What is it about?" and the other replies "All about the same...." The attempt is to clearly connect NATO with Nazi Germany.

Sharzh I Pero or Cartoon and Feather is a satirical newspaper that emerged in 2015. According to reporter Anna Malpas it was founded by pro-Putin Russians connected to the anti-Maidan movement as a response to France's *Charlie Hebdo* in order to counteract liberalism and an anti-Russian bias in Western media. It started as a weekly newspaper available free of charge in Moscow.¹⁸² However, other reports indicate its publication is irregular and nothing has been posted to its Twitter and Instagram accounts since May 2017. Scholar John Etty writes that the creators of *Sharzh I Pero* view the paper as a spiritual successor to *Krokodil*.¹⁸³ The editors of *Sharzh I Pero* state that they "want our pen to be equal to bayonet."¹⁸⁴

This graphic, Figure 12, was published in the magazine *Sharzh I Pero* in April 2016 and directed at a Russian reading audience. *Sharzh I Pero*, along with this image, posted to Twitter and Instagram four additional cartoons critical of NATO between April 7 and

¹⁸² Anna Malpas, "Pro-Putin Movement Launches Cartoon Weekly to Mock West," *Agence France-Presse*, April 21, 2015, <http://news.yahoo.com/pro-putin-movement-launches-cartoon-weekly-mock-west-173822936.html>.

¹⁸³ John Etty, "Joking about Doping: Contested Visions of Sporting Nationalism and Patriotism in Russian Political Cartoons," in *Russian Culture in the Age of Globalization*, ed. Vlad Strukov and Sarah Hudspith, 1st ed. (New York: Routledge, 2019), 154.

¹⁸⁴ "About," *Sharzh I Pero*, accessed September 18, 2019, <https://sharzhipero.ru/web/en/about>.

13, 2016. This was right after the 49th anniversary of the founding of NATO and while NATO Secretary General Stoltenberg met with President Obama in Washington, DC.¹⁸⁵ One of these posts included the caption: “The names of NATO operations and exercises have peaceful names, but in essence, they were cruel and bloody.” The symbols and caption of the graphic are designed to connect NATO with warmongering and hypocrisy as well as remind the viewer of NATO’s 1999 Operation Allied Force, the bombing campaign of Yugoslavia, that is still controversial in Russia.

Depicted in the image is an angel with the NATO logo as its head, its torso is camouflaged, and its wings are covered with bombs. The image would reinforce the beliefs of individuals who already thought NATO had massacred many innocent people in Yugoslavia. and influence others to this belief. The caption reads “Merciful Angel.” According to researcher Elena Voinova, this refers to a Serbian mistranslation in Yugoslavia of the NATO operation name (or the U.S. name, Operation Noble Anvil).¹⁸⁶ Internet searches for “Operation Merciful Angel” return multiple hits, most from Serbian websites or pro-Russian forums. The poster exchanges the idea of a merciful angel for the Angel of Death.

¹⁸⁵ “NATO Secretary General Thanks President Obama for U.S. Commitment to NATO,” Newsroom, NATO, April 4, 2016, http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/news_129662.htm.

¹⁸⁶ Elena Voinova, “Anti-NATO Cartoons In Pro-Kremlin Russian Media,” The Middle East Media Research Institute, May 24, 2016, <https://www.memri.org/reports/anti-nato-cartoons-pro-kremlin-russian-media>.



Figure 12. A NATO Angel Brings Destruction.¹⁸⁷

The World Peace Council (WPC), a front organization during the Cold War for the Soviet Active Measures campaign against NATO, continues its support today of Russian Federation propaganda efforts. In April 2016, the WPC posted on its website a policy statement and links to two posters calling for a global day of protest during the July 2016 NATO Warsaw Summit. The WPC's lengthy position statement calls NATO "an enemy of peace and the people" and provides paragraphs of claims seeking to back this accusation up. One such claim is that NATO contributed to the U.S. and EU efforts to violently overthrow Ukraine's government in 2014. The WPC goes on to justify Russian involvement as mere support to those who "in the face of violence and fascism, people of eastern and southern Ukraine took action to protect their lives, cultures and history, communities and interests." The WPC writes that the Warsaw Summit is a critical opportunity to expand its existing campaign, Yes to Peace! No to NATO! The ultimate

¹⁸⁷ Source: *Sharzh I Pero, Merciful Angel*, April 13, 2016, https://pbs.twimg.com/media/Cf855p6VAAIr_9i?format=jpg&name=240x240.

goal is “the dissolution of NATO at a global level” in order to counter this “key tool of imperialist domination of the globe.”¹⁸⁸

The poster, Figure 13, is designed to connect in the viewer’s thought that NATO is aggressive, warmongering, and seeks to dominate the world. The WPC posters differ from Soviet era posters in that they are montages of color photographs, not renderings by artists, and they are distributed primarily on the internet. The WPC poster engages the eye with bright dynamic colors. NATO’s logo is superimposed over the Arabian Peninsula and the logo encircles most of the Middle East, Southern Europe, and Russia. It is juxtaposed against a soldier wearing a uniform in the Universal Camouflage Pattern, formerly issued by the U.S. Army in the early 2000s. The soldier’s M4 carbine is pointed towards Syria on the map and he has just fired a round. The soldier is in the right front of the poster in the most dominant position. Picasso’s “Dove of Peace” is positioned on the front lower corner of the poster. This delicate image is featured in contrast to the menacing figure of a soldier with a powerful weapon and NATO smothering a large portion of the world.

¹⁸⁸ “Protest NATO’s 2016 Warsaw Summit!,” World Peace Council, April 3, 2016, <https://www.wpc-in.org/statements/protest-nato%E2%80%99s-2016-warsaw-summit>.

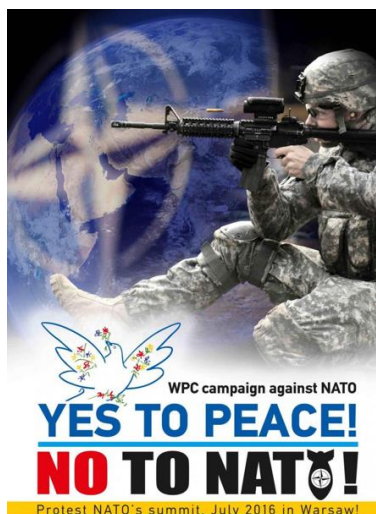


Figure 13. WPC NATO Warsaw Summit Protest Poster.¹⁸⁹

The photograph, Figure 14, is part of a RT online article that was published on the 15th anniversary of the commencement of NATO's air campaign over Yugoslavia. The piece is largely pictorial with a brief introduction and then 15 photos and their captions. The focus is the photographs that are all meant to convey or reinforce the Russian narrative that NATO was the aggressor, killed thousands of civilians, and refused offers of a ceasefire. The propaganda theme of NATO being a tool of the U.S. is also included as a reference is made to the NATO operation being conducted to further U.S. interests. There is no mention of the Serbian oppression of the Kosovar Albanians or why NATO launched Operation Allied Force.¹⁹⁰ The photograph selected is of a funeral and it is captioned "However, the so-called "humanitarian intervention" killed 2,000 civilians." The photo and its caption are used by RT in contrast with NATO's statement that it only bombs military targets and President Clinton's reference to the campaign as a humanitarian intervention. The photo contributes to the Russian narrative portraying NATO as a warmonger and the victimizer of an innocent Yugoslavia.

¹⁸⁹ Source: World Peace Council, *WPC Anti-NATO Poster*, April 3, 2019, Photomontage, https://www.wpc-in.org/sites/default/files/documents/wpc_poster_anti_nato1.jpg.

¹⁹⁰ "15yo NATO Bombings of Yugoslavia in 15 Dramatic Photos," RT, March 24, 2014, <https://www.rt.com/news/nato-yugoslavia-bombings-photos-737/>.



Figure 14. The Human Cost of NATO's Bombing of Yugoslavia.¹⁹¹

The final piece of Russian propaganda analyzed is a short film clip published on July 29, 2018, to YouTube by the Ruptly video news agency, part of the RT news network. The film is a montage of shots depicting the parade of the Russian Black Sea Fleet at Sevastopol in honor of Russia's Navy Day. Russian Prime Minister Dmitry Medvedev attended while Putin observed the larger naval parade held in St. Petersburg.¹⁹² According to the Russian Ministry of Defense, the Sevastopol parade included over 4,000 service members manning more than 80 surface ships, submarines, aircraft, and various armored vehicles and amphibious craft.¹⁹³ The film as a propaganda piece exudes themes of Russian strength, naval power, and connections to a glorious past. This video is quite appealing. It is fast paced and upbeat with significant action and dynamic closeup shots.

¹⁹¹ Source: RT.

¹⁹² Alexander Astafyev, *Prime Minister of Russia Dmitry Medvedev Attends Russian Navy Day Celebrations in Sevastopol*, July 29, 2018, Photograph, <http://sputnikimages.com/media/5601286.html>; "Putin to Review Fleet at Navy Day Parade in St Petersburg on Sunday," TASS, July 28, 2018, <https://tass.com/defense/1015221>.

¹⁹³ "General Rehearsal of Navy Day Parade Takes Place in Sevastopol," Ministry of Defence of the Russian Federation, July 26, 2018, http://eng.mil.ru/en/news_page/country/more.htm?id=12187645@egNews.

The weather provides a brilliant setting for the film with a cloudless, sunny day. There is a strong breeze so the colored pennants and military flags flutter in the wind against a beautiful blue sky.

Figure 15 is a still captured from the film. In the foreground stands in formation a Russian Navy honor guard and band. Behind them sails the Russian state Sail Training Ship *Mir*, while a Russian submarine (*Kilo* or improved *Kilo* class) and a *Rubin* class offshore patrol ship of Coast Guard of the Border Service of the FSB lie at anchor with a 19th century fortification of the port in the background.



Figure 15. Celebrating Navy Day with New Technology and Old Glory.¹⁹⁴

The viewer is shown Russia's naval power and capabilities throughout the film. As is traditional, the fleet commander in his launch passes by a variety of moored warships with the crews in dress white uniforms at attention on deck. These warships include some of Russian Navy's latest warships such as the Buyan-M class corvette and Admiral Grigorovich class frigate as well as old combatants like the Krivak II class frigate Slava class cruiser. Throughout the video, the capabilities, the breadth of equipment and manpower of the Russian Federation Navy are impressively demonstrated. There is a closeup of a torpedo being launched from a Grisha class anti-submarine corvette, rockets firing from a Ropucha class LST, and of multiple rockets launched from BM-21 "Grad"

¹⁹⁴ Adapted from "Russia: Black Sea Fleet Holds Sevastopol Navy Day Parade," July 29, 2018, Ruptly, video, 2:31, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8gaOqrwnCZk>.

vehicles firing from positions on a jetty. The Krasnodor, an improved Kilo class submarine, fills the frame as it glides through the water mysterious, sleek, and threatening. Fighter aircraft scream overhead as attack helicopters pass over. Views of the sailors and officers in their white uniforms on the welcoming pier and on the ships demonstrate the Russian Navy's polish. At another moment Russian Naval Infantry fire off machine guns and then conduct hand to hand combat drills while orange smoke from smoke grenades swirls around them. The film like the Soviet one discussed in Figure 8 closes with an LST releasing a stream of amphibious assault vehicles into the water.

The shots in the film remind the viewer of Russia's history and naval glory. Early shots show a group in 18th century attire passing the naval honor guard. The lead figures, wearing the blue sash of the Order of St. Andrew established by Peter the Great, represent Catherine the Great and her escort Prince Grigory Potemkin. Potemkin played an important role in the Russian history of Sevastopol including the conquest of Crimea, development of the harbor, and building the Black Sea Fleet.¹⁹⁵ Two monuments related to the military defense of Sevastopol are focused on during shots in the film: The Monument to the Sunken Ships and The Soldier and Sailor Monument. The former was built in the bay in 1905 to commemorate the Imperial Russian Navy ships sunk in the defense of Sevastopol during the siege of 1854–1855. The latter monument is a more recent one and celebrates the defenders of Sevastopol during the 1941–1942 siege that earned the city the “Hero City” honor from Stalin and the liberators of Crimea in May 1944. The monument shots remind viewers of Russia's sacrifice in defending Sevastopol from foreign aggression.

This film was produced to emphasize important themes including the following: the connection of Russia today to the time of Peter the Great and the Russian Empire, that Russia once again has a powerful navy, that Russia and Sevastopol are inseparable, and that Russian Navy is equipped to successfully defend Russian territory near the Black Sea as did their forebears in the Great Patriotic War.

¹⁹⁵ *Encyclopaedia Britannica Online*, s.v. “Grigory Potemkin: Russian Statesman,” October 12, 2019, <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Grigory-Potemkin>.

C. CONCLUSION

The Russian Federation is and will continue to be a formidable opponent for NATO. The value of propaganda was recognized by the founders of the Soviet Union, and during the Cold War the Soviet leadership relied heavily on propaganda in its effort to undermine NATO. Posters, cartoons, and other visual messaging played a significant part in the Soviets' effort. More recently, the Russian Federation has continued in this tradition while investing considerable resources in diverse but coordinated media channels to portray NATO in graphic terms as an aggressor and a tool of the United States.

III. NATO: INFORMATION SERVICE TO PUBLIC DIPLOMACY

Chapter III shifts the focus from Russian and Soviet propaganda efforts to NATO's propaganda and information operations that have worked to bolster the alliance and counter anti-NATO propaganda.

The chapter opens with a section that provides an overview of NATO's Cold War public information efforts. This includes a look at NATO's perspective on propaganda as well on the Soviet Union. In addition, the methods, means, goals, and themes of NATO propaganda are briefly examined. This section closes with an analysis of seven pieces of visual propaganda created and disseminated by NATO during the Cold War.

Following this look at NATO Cold War propaganda efforts, the focus shifts to NATO's post 2014 propaganda operations. This portion of the chapter is laid out in a similar fashion to the previous in order for the reader to compare and contrast NATO propaganda efforts during the Cold War and in the past decade. Lastly, eight pieces of propaganda are presented and analyzed to draw attention to the themes and messaging present.

The chapter concludes with a short section that highlights observations and critical points noted earlier in the chapter. The focus here is on lessons learned from NATO's Cold War propaganda efforts and how or if they are being applied today. This will help to answer the questions asked in Chapter I.

A. NATO INFORMATION EFFORTS DURING THE COLD WAR

1. NATO Views on Propaganda

NATO took a different approach to propaganda than the Soviet Union. NATO leadership recognized that the Soviet Union wielded a massive propaganda apparatus against the Alliance. In addition, they acknowledged that the USSR had advantages when it came to propaganda. In 1959, NATO Secretary General Paul-Henri Spaak wrote that:

The USSR makes the utmost use of a weapon of which she is a master – propaganda. In this, too, she often has the advantage of us. The Western nations, we must admit, are often slow to react. Furthermore, since their

policy is aimed at a positive and balanced solution, it generally leads them to adopt fairly complex attitudes which are poor material for propaganda. The USSR, on the contrary, is in a position to react rapidly. Since her object is to hustle her adversaries and put them on their guard, she can resort to the over-simplified and spectacular formula which catches the imagination of the masses, such as: “Ban the atom bomb!” , “German rearmament means war!,” “Colonialist exploitation is the curse of the underdeveloped countries!,” etc.¹⁹⁶

The question was how to react. According to Risso, the governments of the democratic nations of the West were at a disadvantage because postwar they had significantly reduced the propaganda apparatuses built up to rally their populations to victory in the Second World War. Further she argues that this was due to the view in the West that propaganda was viewed in a negative light, a tool of dictators, and that democracies should not resort to its use in peacetime.¹⁹⁷ There were debates within NATO on the proper course, compromises were reached, and NATO information campaigns were carried out throughout the Cold War. In 1959, Lord Ismay, NATO’s first Secretary General, wrote of these compromises noting that NATO’s Information Service is limited to creation and coordination of information campaigns to bolster the Alliance. It is up to national information services to fully implement the programs. In addition, NATO could be a forum for consultations on psychological warfare or counterpropaganda, but the consultations would be limited to situations impacting Alliance members. NATO would not carry out propaganda campaigns against the USSR or Warsaw Pact nations.¹⁹⁸ Of note are the different terms used by NATO of information, propaganda, and psychological warfare. Osgood provides illumination as to the usage of these different terms. He writes that Western governments used these terms interchangeably, except in public where they described the NATO and national propaganda efforts as information.¹⁹⁹ In this chapter,

¹⁹⁶ Paul-Henri Spaak, *Why NATO?* (Baltimore, MD: Penguin Books, 1959), 29, http://archives.nato.int/uploads/r/null/1/3/137372/0084_Why_NATO_1959_ENG.pdf.

¹⁹⁷ Risso, *Propaganda and Intelligence in the Cold War*, 29.

¹⁹⁸ Lord Hastings Ismay, *NATO The First Five Years 1949–1954* (Paris, France: NATO, 1954), 154–55, http://archives.nato.int/uploads/r/null/2/1/216977/NATO-The_first_5_years_1949-1954__by_Lord_Ismay_.pdf.

¹⁹⁹ Osgood, *Total Cold War*, 7–9.

the terms propaganda and information are used interchangeably with the understanding that they are the same in this context.

2. NATO Methods of Propaganda

As to where on the propaganda spectrum NATO Cold War propaganda falls, unlike the Soviet Union's efforts, it is predominantly of the white type. The utilization of grey and black types of propaganda was left to the purview of the national information agencies such as the United States Information Agency (USIA). According to Osgood, the USIA stressed grey types of propaganda to covertly boost support for NATO while weakening that for communism.²⁰⁰

In early 1950, NATO leadership decided to “promote and coordinate public information in furtherance of the objectives of the Treaty while leaving responsibility for national programs to each country.”²⁰¹ By the fall of 1950 NATO propaganda efforts were led by NATIS. A small staff led by a Director of Information were tasked with promoting accurate, unclassified information on NATO.²⁰² The annual budget of NATIS in the early 1950s was around £35,000.²⁰³ Given the small annual budget NATIS found itself relying on assistance from national information services throughout the Cold War. In September 1953, the Committee on Information and Cultural Relations (CICR) was formed through the merger of two earlier working groups. The CICR was charged to advise the North Atlantic Council (NAC) on how to increase public support for NATO via information and culture through either collective action or that of individual member states. The CICR's responsibilities included reporting on Soviet anti-Western propaganda.²⁰⁴ According to

²⁰⁰ Osgood, 109–13.

²⁰¹ L. Francis Morrissey, “NAC Deputies: Proposal by the Chairman: Information Service” (NATO, August 11, 1950), 2, http://archives.nato.int/uploads/r/null/3/3/33904/D-D_17-REV1_ENG.pdf.

²⁰² T.A.G. Charlton, “Report of the North Atlantic Council Deputies” (New York: North Atlantic Treaty Organization, September 14, 1950), 11–12.

²⁰³ Ismay, *NATO The First Five Years 1949–1954*, 154.

²⁰⁴ “Committee on Information and Cultural Relations,” Archives Online, NATO, accessed September 19, 2019, <http://archives.nato.int/committee-on-information-and-cultural-relations>.

Risso, though the CICR oversaw NATIS, they worked cooperatively to bolster the Alliance through the dissemination of information.²⁰⁵ Though NATIS created and provided information products to support the Treaty it is clear that there was a lack of coordination amongst the national information services. This was probably compounded by the Alliance believing that “the important task of explaining and reporting NATO activities rests primarily on national Information Services.”²⁰⁶

3. NATO Means of Propaganda

Throughout the Cold War, NATO utilized various means of communications to convey its public information campaigns to the masses. Some were modified or even phased out of usage over the decades due to cost or views of how effective a certain form of communications was. In many cases they also required the support and cooperation of the member nations to execute them. These means included exhibitions (both mobile and static), publications, film, private associations, and visits to NATO headquarters. A brief overview of them provides the reader with an appreciation for the limited nature of NATO’s efforts.

Exhibitions were one of the early means of advertising NATO’s purpose and its role in each of the Alliance states. In the late 1940s and early 1950s the main means of communication was the radio and the newspaper, and access might be limited for those in rural areas. In 1951, the concept originated for a traveling exhibition that would tour the countries of the Alliance.²⁰⁷ According to Risso, the program was inspired by the traveling exhibitions of the Marshall Plan that toured Europe to showcase the virtues of that recovery

²⁰⁵ Risso, *Propaganda and Intelligence in the Cold War*, 63–64.

²⁰⁶ NATO Information Service, *NATO: Facts and Figures* (Brussels, Belgium: NATO Information Service, 1976), 198,
http://archives.nato.int/uploads/r/null/1/4/145691/0034_NATO_Facts_and_Figures_1976_ENG.pdf.

²⁰⁷ “NATO’s Travelling Exhibitions,” *The Cold War, NATO*, accessed September 21, 2019,
http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/declassified_149236.htm.

effort and to convey that it was not a tool of American imperialism.²⁰⁸ The NATO program started modestly and was funded by the U.S. The trailers contained exhibits reminding the viewer of the peace achieved in 1945, the Soviet aggression in the late 1940s, and thus the need for NATO.²⁰⁹ In the 1950s these exhibition trailers called the “Caravan of Peace” were visited by over 10 million individuals during stops at 550 locations in nine Alliance countries. Eventually due to concerns over costs the traveling exhibition caravans were downsized to a mix of static exhibitions and “Mobile Information Centre (MIC).”²¹⁰ The sale of the caravan equipment enabled the purchase of two buses, the MICs, that provided classroom space and the ability to project indoor and outdoor films (for a larger audience).²¹¹ According to Risso and NATO, the two MICs toured throughout the 1960s and were continually in demand by member nations, but by 1970 with the spread of television and the population size of the Alliance it was deemed not cost effective to continue using the MICs.²¹²

NATO created and disseminated various types of print publications throughout the Cold War ranging from posters to reports. Commemorative postage stamps were designed and issued by NATO and Alliance members with the first issued by Portugal and the U.S. in 1952.²¹³ Even stickers were made promoting NATO as “insurance for peace.”²¹⁴ A vast amount of publications were produced by NATO during the Cold War. Director of NATIS Joseph Phillips writes that in 1958 alone more than a million copies of various publications

²⁰⁸ Linda Risso, “Propaganda on Wheels: The NATO Travelling Exhibitions in the 1950s and 1960s,” *Cold War History* 11, no. 1 (February 2011): 13, <https://doi.org/10.1080/14682745.2011.545595>.

²⁰⁹ Risso, 14.

²¹⁰ Joseph B. Phillips, “Public Opinion and NATO,” *NATO Letter*, January 1959, 37.

²¹¹ NATO, “NATO’s Travelling Exhibitions.”

²¹² Risso, “Propaganda on Wheels,” 18; North Atlantic Treaty Organization, “NATO’s Travelling Exhibitions.”

²¹³ Risso, *Propaganda and Intelligence in the Cold War*, 91; “Stamp for NATO’s New Headquarters,” News, NATO, October 26, 2016, http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/news_136401.htm.

²¹⁴ NATO Public Diplomacy Division, “Item - NATO – Our Insurance for Peace,” NATO Archives Online, December 8, 2014, <http://archives.nato.int/nato-our-insurance-for-peace>.

were produced and distributed across the Alliance.²¹⁵ According to Risso the publications tended to fall into three categories: those generated for the general public, those for the national information services and selected individuals, and those for dissemination within the CICR. The publications for the first group usually targeted a specific group such as Alliance troops in training or students but could be shared with a wider audience and the key points of the messaging could be easily understood by anyone. The second type of publications was meant to assist in the coordination of messaging related to NATO between NATIS and the national information services. It was factual but due to the intended audience it was written in a manner that necessitated restrictions on its distribution. The last type of publications was reports providing information on national and international communist parties and organizations. They were secret and gave national delegations and trusted contacts background information that could be used indirectly in the generation of messaging at the national levels.²¹⁶

Film was an important means for NATIS to disseminate messaging bolstering the Alliance. According to Risso, NATIS produced these short films in cooperation with national information services especially the United States Information Agency (USIA).²¹⁷ The films were generally short and served to explain NATO's role, value, as well as inform viewers about the member states of NATO. Throughout the Cold War, films were a means to inform Allied military personnel on the exercises and operations of their fellow NATO service members such as *Northern Flank* or *Four Days in Autumn*.²¹⁸ In the 1950s, a series of films called the *Atlantic Community – Know your Allies* was made for just this

²¹⁵ Phillips, "Public Opinion and NATO," 38.

²¹⁶ Risso, *Propaganda and Intelligence in the Cold War*, 156.

²¹⁷ Risso, 172.

²¹⁸ Imperial War Museums, "Northern Flank [Main Title]," IWM Collections - Film, accessed September 16, 2019, <https://film.iwmcollections.org.uk/record/41350>; Imperial War Museums, "Four Days In Autumn [Main Title]," IWM Collections - Film, accessed September 16, 2019, <https://film.iwmcollections.org.uk/record/41369>.

purpose.²¹⁹ The short films include shots of everyday life in urban and rural areas while the narrator describes the life, culture, and history of the nation. The contributions of the nation to the Atlantic Community militarily, politically, and economically are highlighted.²²⁰ In the 1960s NATIS produced films promoting the economic and political benefits of NATO membership. Films such as *Europe: Two Decades* and *Two Worlds – Twenty Years*, a comparison of Belgium and Czechoslovakia, show the progress Europe has made since the Second World War and subtly link economic recovery and political freedom to NATO.²²¹ In 1983 NATIS released *Barriers* to educate a new generation. The film narrated by Charlton Heston discusses post war European history, highlights the militaristic expansion and domineering nature of the USSR, and characterizes NATO as the “very hub of global stability, which has grown from courage, determination, and a steadfast application of human values.”²²²

Lastly, NATO worked to spread its messaging via private associations and visits to NATO’s headquarters. Throughout the Alliance private associations generated support for NATO and promoted the idea of uniting militarily, politically, and economically to form a powerful Atlantic community. Phillips notes that “the private associations in support of NATO...do excellent work.”²²³ These voluntary organizations were an important supplement to NATIS and the Alliance states’ national information services in promoting the role and value of NATO to the public.²²⁴ NATO Visits were an important way to

²¹⁹ Ismay, *NATO The First Five Years 1949–1954*, 155–56.

²²⁰ “Introducing... - The Atlantic Community Series [1954-1956],” Official NATO History Video Channel, NATO, May 9, 2019, <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCLXVOXd7TU2-YixUWqUfWQw>.

²²¹ Imperial War Museums, “Europe - Two Decades [Main Title],” IWM Collections - Film, accessed September 16, 2019, <https://film.iwmcollections.org.uk/record/41399>; Imperial War Museums, “Two Worlds - Twenty Years [Main Title],” IWM Collections - Film, accessed September 17, 2019, <https://film.iwmcollections.org.uk/record/41398>.

²²² Imperial War Museums, “Barriers [Main Title],” IWM Collections - Film, accessed September 16, 2019, <https://film.iwmcollections.org.uk/record/41371>.

²²³ Phillips, “Public Opinion and NATO,” 38.

²²⁴ Phillips, 38.

showcase NATO in person. Phillips writes that 10,000 people visited NATO HQ in 1959 alone. These visits were not paid for by NATO. The people, from individuals to civic groups to business associations and beyond, came to learn more about the Alliance. They received briefings from NATO officials and participated in discussions pertaining to the Alliance.²²⁵ Risso notes that from the 1960s onward on average 12,000 people visited NATO HQ annually.²²⁶

4. View of the USSR as Conveyed in NATO Publications

The Alliance viewed the Soviet Union and its Warsaw Pact allies as a military and political threat to the liberal democratic order of the West. This view was informed not only by the actions of the USSR in the second half of the 1940s but also by the rhetoric and actions of the Soviet Union throughout the Cold War. NATO publications characterize the Soviet Union as well its actions in a number of ways. Soviet values are not Western values. One NATO publication states that Communism “like any dictatorship, cannot tolerate democratic liberty, impartial justice, and the respect of the individual, which are the foundations of our Western civilization.”²²⁷ NATO did not seek to impose its democratic values on the USSR. The concern was the combination of the aforementioned Soviet values with the USSR’s militant and expansionist tendencies. NATO states that since the end of the Second World War the USSR has used internal subversion and armed intervention to annex or control through proxies the nations of Central and Eastern Europe thus enslaving over 100 million people.²²⁸ NATO’s view at the time was that the USSR is not content to stop, but is instead intent on dominating the world.²²⁹ The USSR is seen as seeking to

²²⁵ Phillips, 37.

²²⁶ Risso, *Propaganda and Intelligence in the Cold War*, 204.

²²⁷ NATO Information Service, *Vigilance the Price of Liberty* (Brussels, Belgium: NATO Information Service, 1960), 6, http://archives.nato.int/uploads/r/null/1/3/137393/0091_Vigilance_the_price_of_liberty_1960_ENG.pdf.

²²⁸ Frédéric Mégret, ed., *NATO Means Peace* (Brussels, Belgium: NATO Information Service, 1957), 5–13, http://archives.nato.int/uploads/r/null/1/3/137323/0065_NATO_Means_Peace_1956-1957_ENG.pdf.

²²⁹ Mégret, 46–47.

neutralize NATO by separating its members through intimidation, propaganda, and playing on national differences.²³⁰ Even in the later 1980s, towards the end of the Cold War, the aggression of the Soviet Union over the previous four decades was a concern and was pointed out in NATO publications.²³¹

5. Goals of NATO Propaganda

The goals of NATO information campaigns can be discerned in many of the propaganda pieces created and distributed by NATIS. Due to the existential threat of the Soviet Union, a number of the goals of NATO propaganda related to the military function of the Alliance including reminding the populace of the Soviet danger, reassuring NATO allies, and countering Soviet anti-NATO propaganda.²³² NATO information campaigns had additional important goals. The Alliance sought to bolster support for NATO from the populace, educate said populace on NATO's purpose, and highlight the value of the Alliance.²³³ Risso writes that shortly after the formation of NATIS, a working group determined that NATO information campaigns must support two main goals: promote the reason for NATO's core existence as a defensive alliance and advertise NATO's role in increasing the prosperity of its members through economic and political cooperation. The

²³⁰ NATO Information Service, *Know Your NATO. North Atlantic Treaty Organization: Shield of Freedom, 1949–1959* (Brussels, Belgium: NATO Information Service, 1959), 13–14, http://archives.nato.int/uploads/r/null/1/3/137350/0067_Know_your_NATO_1949-1959_ENG.pdf; NATO Information Service, *NATO: Hope of The Free World* (New York: American Council on NATO, 1959), 20–21, <http://archives.nato.int/nato-hope-of-free-world>.

²³¹ NATO Information Service, *Your Pass to NATO* (Brussels, Belgium: Jacques JACOB & PUBLICAT S.A., 1986), 2, <http://archives.nato.int/your-pass-to-nato>.

²³² NATO Information Service, *Why NATO?* (Brussels, Belgium: NATO Information Service, 1968), 2, http://archives.nato.int/uploads/r/null/1/3/137547/0204_Why_NATO_1968_ENG.pdf; NATO Information Service, *SACLANT NATO Story* (Brussels, Belgium: NATO Information Service, 1962), 2, http://archives.nato.int/uploads/r/null/1/3/137451/0101_SACLANT_NATO_Story_1962-GUARDIAN_OF_THE_ATLANTIC_ENG.pdf; NATO Information Service, *Know Your NATO. North Atlantic Treaty Organization: Shield of Freedom, 1949–1959*, 13–14; NATO Information Service, *NATO: Insurance for Peace* (Brussels, Belgium: NATO Information Service, 1962), 11, http://archives.nato.int/uploads/r/null/1/3/137445/0103_NATO_Insurance_for_Peace_1962_ENG.pdf.

²³³ Mégret, *NATO Means Peace*, 47; NATO Information Service, *Vigilance the Price of Liberty*, 21; NATO Information Service, *NATO: Hope of The Free World*, 5, 14–16.

former goal related to the provisions of Article Five of The North Atlantic Treaty and the latter goal to Article Two.²³⁴ In addition, the publication of the 1967 Harmel Report, known formally as the “Report of the Council on the Future Tasks of the Alliance,” provided additional impetus to focus on goals related to showcasing NATO’s non-military benefits and as well as NATO’s pursuit of peace. The Harmel Report reaffirmed NATO’s core reasons for existence while acknowledging that the global situation had changed since 1949. It called upon the Alliance to play a key role “in the promotion of détente and the strengthening of peace.”²³⁵

6. The Common Themes of NATO Propaganda

There are four main themes that appear in NATO propaganda throughout the Cold War. All of the themes fall into two groupings: those relating to NATO’s military purpose and the themes relating to NATO’s political and economic benefits. Two of the main themes fall into the former category and promote collective self-defense as well as the need to deter the existential threat posed by the Soviet Union. The other two main themes fall into the latter categorization and seek to portray NATO as being more than a military alliance as well championing the values NATO embodies and upholds. As Risso argues, NATO recognized that it needed to adjust messaging themes throughout the Cold War. The focus could not always be on themes related to Article Five but had to expand and incorporate themes highlighting Article Two. This was especially important to counter the Soviet Union’s peace offensive propaganda campaign.²³⁶

7. NATO Cold War Visual Propaganda Analysis

The selection of visual pieces in this section provide an overview of NATO public information efforts during the Cold War. The pieces consist of a couple posters, a photograph, a short film, a short book, and two brochures. They are representative of the

²³⁴ Risso, *Propaganda and Intelligence in the Cold War*, 56.

²³⁵ NATO, “The Future Tasks of the Alliance: Report of the Council (‘The Harmel Report’),” December 14, 1967, http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/official_texts_26700.htm.

²³⁶ Risso, *Propaganda and Intelligence in the Cold War*, 176–77.

mediums that NATO relied on to spread its messaging to the civilians and members of the armed forces in NATO countries.

This poster, Figure 16, created by Giuseppe Groce, was an Italian entry in a poster contest held by the Marshall Plan, formally known as the European Recovery Program (ERP) in 1950. The themes of the winning posters focus on the economic recovery of Europe through the cooperation of its constituent nations. The 25 winning posters including this one were utilized by NATO in its European traveling exhibitions throughout the 1950s to build support for European cooperation.²³⁷

In the poster a towering female figure dominates the view. Perhaps she represents Europa, a nymph in ancient Greek mythology long associated with the founding of Europe. The figure has firm brick-like foundations in the European soil and stretches heavenward into the deep blue sky. This figure is an interesting contrast to the massive Soviet warrior in Figure 4. Here the figure looks towards a peace dove and yet her strength is still present as represented by her war spear. Draped across her head and shoulders is a scarf made up of the flags of 13 European nations. In the foreground, shoots of grain have recently sprouted while in the background a factory's smokestacks spout smoke. These symbols show that after the destruction of the Second World War, the earth is again producing food and the rebuilt factories are creating goods. Further it symbolizes that this is all possible when the nations of Europe unite together.

²³⁷ "The Marshall Plan or European Recovery Programme," Newsroom, NATO, September 21, 2015, https://www.nato.int/cps/us/natohq/photos_121998.htm.



Figure 16. Europe Looks to Peace but is Ready for War.²³⁸

This second poster, Figure 17, was created to commemorate the tenth anniversary of the founding of the NATO alliance. According to the NATO web page, it was used for many years throughout Alliance countries to bolster support for NATO.²³⁹ The illustrator is unknown though a signature can be found oriented vertically on the left side of the poster.

The poster is striking due to the figures depicted and the use of starkly contrasting colors. The figures of the woman and child call to mind depictions of the Madonna and Child, familiar imagery in Europe due to prevalent depiction of Mary and the baby Jesus in Christian art dating back centuries. The image of mother and child without the presence of a husband or father figure would also have been a familiar sight to those who had lived through the death and destruction of the Second World War. In the poster the child stares at the viewer while the presumed mother looks toward the wall that protects her and her child. The wall is formed by the NATO Alliance members. On her side the wall appears

²³⁸ Source: Giuseppe Groce, *Untitled*, ca 1950, Poster, https://www.nato.int/nato_static_fl2014/assets/pictures/posters_1949-2013/20150805_08-1706_ERP-collection_1948est_HR.jpg.

²³⁹ “Anniversary Posters,” Newsroom, NATO, June 30, 2015, https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/photos_121392.htm?selectedLocale=en.

solid with no gaps, yet in profile one can see that it is made up of building blocks, in this case the 15 members of the Alliance in 1959. The flags depicted are of the original 12 members plus Greece and Turkey (joined in 1952) and the FRG (joined in 1955).²⁴⁰ The images and words remind the viewer that the NATO Alliance has protected the women and children of its constituent states for the last decade.



Figure 17. Ten Years of NATO's Protection.²⁴¹

This photograph, Figure 18, captures a historic moment in NATO and European history. The photograph was taken at the NAC Ministerial Session in Paris, France on October 23, 1954. The day before on October 22, 1954, the NAC along with other business approved a protocol inviting the FRG to join NATO and this photograph captures the signing of this protocol the next day.²⁴² It was one of a number of international accords

²⁴⁰ "Member Countries," Topics, NATO, May 14, 2019, http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/topics_52044.htm.

²⁴¹ Source: NATO, *NATO 10th Anniversary*, ca 1959, Poster, https://www.nato.int/nato_static_fl2014/assets/pictures/posters_1949-2013/20150630_1726_NATO-10-anniversary_1952est_ENG_HR-2.jpg.

²⁴² "North Atlantic Council - Paris Ministerial Session - Final Communiqué," Ministerial Communiqués, NATO, October 22, 1954, <https://www.nato.int/docu/comm/49-95/c541022a.htm>; "Protocol to the North Atlantic Treaty on the Accession of the Federal Republic of Germany," NATO, October 23, 1954, http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/official_texts_17411.htm.

that were signed over a few days in October 1954 and are collectively known as the Paris Agreements. One of the more famous accords amended the Brussels Treaty and invited the FRG and Italy to join the Western Union, resulting in the creation of the Western European Union.²⁴³

The setting of the photograph is important. The arch of the ministers' tables directs the viewer's gaze to the signatory chair and past it to the arching structure of the Eiffel Tower, recognized worldwide as a symbol of Paris. Ten years prior to this photograph the whole European continent was engulfed by war and Paris had been liberated from Nazi German occupation on August 25, 1944. Yet here are gathered many of Germany's former foes to invite it to join a new defensive Alliance. This is a momentous occasion and it conveys what the nations of Europe along with Canada and the U.S. can accomplish together.



Figure 18. A Historic Moment as the FRG is Invited to Join the Alliance.²⁴⁴

²⁴³ “The History of the European Union - 1954,” About the EU, European Union, June 16, 2016, https://europa.eu/european-union/about-eu/history/1946-1959/1954_en.

²⁴⁴ Adapted from NATO, *The Federal Republic of Germany Is Invited to Join NATO*, October 23, 1954, Photograph, <https://www.nato.int/pictures/database/large/b00899.jpg>.

The image, Figure 19, is adapted from the cover of a short book created by the NATO Information Service in 1959. The book *NATO: Hope of the Free World* is 23 pages and is interspersed with illustrations similar in style to the cover aimed at adolescents. It is composed of an introduction explaining that NATO was formed while “Western democracy was in full retreat before the constant aggression of Soviet Russia.”²⁴⁵ It further explains what NATO has accomplished in the 10 years since its founding: that NATO has preserved peace, halted Soviet expansion, raised living standards. The text acknowledges that NATO, like democracies, needs the continued support of every individual and that this is only possible through education and understanding.²⁴⁶ Then through 15 questions and answers it explains NATO, its goals, important policy positions, relationship to the United Nations (UN), and closes explaining the citizen’s role in NATO. The book remarks on the Soviet attempts to disrupt NATO and notes that a preferred tactic is to threaten and pressure individual NATO members, but that the Alliance is able to respond in a united manner and thus stymie the USSR. This is followed with an observation that the USSR is likely to test out other tactics to fracture the Alliance because NATO “remains the great bulwark against their drive to rule the world.”²⁴⁷

The illustrations throughout the text soundly reinforce the messaging of the book. The imagery is simple, but it powerfully conveys ideas to the reader. It begins with the cover and first two pages where the NATO star deflects a red arrow from striking the well-known landmarks of NATO states. Additional illustrations include a rabid-looking bear leaning menacingly over a map of Europe appearing ready to carve it with a hammer and sickle. The danger of the USSR is reinforced on the next pages with an outline of the Kremlin in red with wispy, devilish tendrils reaching out from it across the pages towards drawings of major European landmarks. The following pages counterpoint this by a drawing of Uncle Sam astride a donkey and elephant whose tails are entwined, both appearing happy (an interesting image given today’s political partisanship in the U.S.),

²⁴⁵ NATO Information Service, *NATO: Hope of The Free World*, 3.

²⁴⁶ NATO Information Service, 5.

²⁴⁷ NATO Information Service, 20–21.

while Uncle Sam's arm stretches diagonally across the entire book to clasp hands with figures depicting the UK and France. Later drawings depict: a bucolic outdoor market with stalls comprised of the NATO members, the star of the NATO Alliance mediating and comforting two men who are portrayed as arguing, a policeman with a NATO badge confronting a shocked robber (in the guise of a bear) carrying a bag with the words "CZECHOSLOVAKIA, HUNGARY, LATVIA" written on it. The book closes with a depiction of a city at night with a woman holding her child inside her home and high overhead appears the only star, the NATO star. This serves as closing reminder that even though one might not realize it, NATO is always watching over and protecting its citizens' way of life.

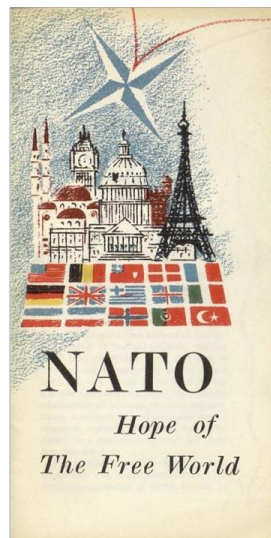


Figure 19. A Short Book for Adolescents Explaining NATO's Purpose.²⁴⁸

In late 1984 and early 1985, NATIS prepared and produced a 10-page brochure entitled "Women in the NATO Forces." Figure 20 is a photograph included in the brochure. It was created in preparation for the 12th Conference of the Committee of Women in the NATO Forces that took place in May 1985. The brochure's text provides a brief history of the Committee, its purpose and responsibility, along with policies and statistics pertaining

²⁴⁸ Adapted from NATO Information Service, *NATO: Hope of The Free World*.

to women in the armed services of NATO members. The brochure notes that Denmark, the Netherlands, Norway, the UK, and U.S. organized the first conference in 1961 with the purpose of encouraging the “wider employment of women within the services to the common benefit of NATO.”²⁴⁹ It is pointed out that the committee’s position since 1973 is that women should be used in all military roles except for combat ones. Yet, looking to the future and recognizing the valuable contribution of women to NATO forces, the brochure’s text envisions an ever-increasing role for women and that the combat prohibition will continue to be debated.²⁵⁰

The text is accompanied by 13 photographs showcasing women in different military roles. They range from a medical role, what might be considered more traditional, to physical (refueling an aircraft) and technical (repairing telecommunications equipment and piloting an aircraft), and even of a female soldier aiming a M-72 Light Anti-Tank Weapon, a disposable rocket launcher. Perhaps this latter photograph hints at the debate over allowing women into combat roles. Figure 20 is of three women in pilot attire standing in front of a what appears to be a Fouga CM.170 Magister two-seat jet trainer aircraft. It demonstrates to girls and young women that in NATO countries they are capable of operating technologically advanced weapons of war. The purpose of the brochure is not only to educate the citizens of NATO countries, but also to demonstrate NATO’s commitment to democratic values including equality. In addition, the brochure continues the theme found in the book associated with Figure 19, that NATO needs all the citizens to support the Alliance. Here it shows that women can have a vital and martial role in bolstering the Alliance and NATO cannot forgo such support in its defense of Europe.

²⁴⁹ NATO Information Service, *Women in the NATO Forces* (Brussels, Belgium: NATO Information Service, 1984), <http://archives.nato.int/women-in-nato-forces>.

²⁵⁰ NATO Information Service.



Figure 20. Three Pilots Representing Women Serving in NATO.²⁵¹

NATO distributed the next brochure between 1986 and 1989 to educate the populations of member states on the Alliance. The image, Figure 21, appears on the cover and depicts Europe and highlights the location of NATO HQ in Belgium. Similar to the other NATO publications discussed earlier, this work is a combination of short paragraphs of text and illustrations. The brochure explains NATO's origins, basis in Article 51 of the UN Charter, NATO's goals, its structure, and why it still exists. It is an interesting contrast to the book associated with Figure 19. The intended audience is clearly older as inferred both from the style of illustration and from the more detailed textual description of NATO. Of particular note is that while Soviet aggression is evidenced as both an impetus for NATO's creation and continued necessity, the level of fear is significantly toned down. The text describes NATO as being established "after a period of growing Soviet post-war expansionism."²⁵² The Soviet menace still exists as does possible nuclear annihilation, but it is not 1959 and the USSR is no longer a rabid bear poised to devour Europe.

²⁵¹ Adapted from NATO Information Service.

²⁵² NATO Information Service, *Your Pass to NATO*.

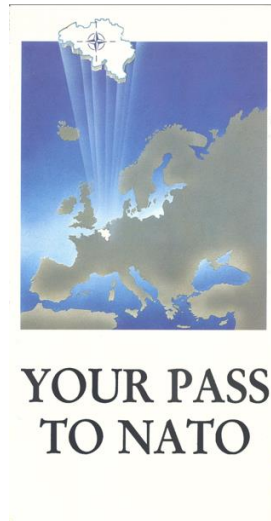


Figure 21. Welcome to NATO HQ.²⁵³

The last piece analyzed in this section is a short film, “High Journey.” The image of the Acropolis of Ancient Athens, Figure 22, was captured from the film. It is representative of the film which was shot in color entirely from the air utilizing air force aircraft of the NATO members. The film gives the viewer the sensation of flying across Europe as clips of ten Alliance nations are shown. One is treated to striking shots of mountains, seas, and other landscape features of Europe from the far northern lands to the southern reaches and from Portugal in the west to Turkey in the east. Famous cities of Europe including Lisbon, the ports of the Low Countries, Paris, Berlin, Rome, Athens, and Istanbul all appear.

The film was produced by NATIS under the direction of Peter Baylis. The original version was released in March 1959 in French followed quickly by English, Portuguese, and German versions. Additional languages were added in the 1960s and early 1970s. A revised version of the film was released in 1969 to include footage of the Berlin Wall. Of interest is that the English language version of the film is narrated by Orson Welles.²⁵⁴

²⁵³ Adapted from NATO Information Service.

²⁵⁴ Imperial War Museums, “High Journey [Main Title],” IWM Collections - Film, accessed September 8, 2019, <https://film.iwmcollections.org.uk/record/41348>.

This film propaganda was targeted at NATO population demographics broadly. According to NATO, the film received wide theatrical distribution and won awards including a silver medal at the Venice Film Festival in 1959 and Best Short Film from the British Film Academy Award in 1960.²⁵⁵

The focus of the film is not NATO or military themes. Instead the viewer is drawn in by the splendor of Europe. This is reinforced in the English language version by the narration of Welles. He provides an evocative and engaging narrative weaving together commentary on the physical geography of Europe along with its ancient and modern history as well as its culture. The interconnectedness of Europe is stressed. At one point as the viewer flies across the industry of the Ruhr, Saar, and Lorraine, Welles remarks that these are no longer national regions, but one industrial community. As footage of Athens, including Figure 22, is seen, Welles speaks an excerpt from Pericles' Funeral Oration. This quote encapsulates one of NATO's values: that power should not be in the hands of a minority like in the USSR, but in the hands of the democratically elected representatives of the people. Towards the end of the film, as the viewer flies over Istanbul, Welles reinforces this unity of Europe saying, "An old world of many nations and many flags, with different languages and different ways of life, but in spite of it all, drawn together by something they have in common, something they think worth having, something they think worth keeping."²⁵⁶ Only at a few points throughout the film do Alliance military aircraft appear and they are shown patrolling the skies over Europe. The defensive might of the Alliance is not fully shown until the end when fighter aircraft are scrambled to intercept an unidentified aircraft. It turns out, creatively, that this is the viewer's aircraft, as one intercepting fighter jet aims right at the viewer. The NATO flight leader is then assured by Welles that the unidentified aircraft (the viewer) is a friend to which the flight leader responds, "Pass friend, on your way!" and banks away from the viewer.²⁵⁷

²⁵⁵ "United States and NATO - 1949," Origins, NATO accessed September 6, 2019, http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/declassified_162350.htm.

²⁵⁶ *High Journey*, written and edited by Peter Baylis (1958; Paris, France: NATO Information Service), <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9ZaLL-vQ58s&feature=youtu.be>.

²⁵⁷ Baylis.



Figure 22. The Acropolis and Parthenon, Symbols of Athenian Democracy.²⁵⁸

B. NATO PUBLIC DIPLOMACY EFFORTS SINCE 2014

1. NATO Views on Propaganda

In the 1990s and the early 2000s the Alliance struggled with relevancy following the disappearance of the Soviet threat as well as new challenges including the admission of new members, international terrorism, and the International Security Assistance Force mission in Afghanistan. Thus, in the turmoil of this post-Cold War world it became apparent that there was a need for an invigorated public information campaign. Barbora Maronkova, director of the NATO Information and Documentation Center, argues that NATO encountered numerous challenges in this new century that necessitated effective communication with the populations of Alliance members in order to bolster support for NATO.²⁵⁹

In January 2004 at his first press briefing as NATO Secretary General, Jaap de Hoop Scheffer singled out the criticality of messaging to NATO in this period by saying

²⁵⁸ Adapted from *High Journey*.

²⁵⁹ Maronkova, “From Crawling to Walking: Progress in Evaluating the Effectiveness of Public Diplomacy: Lessons Learned from NATO,” 5–6.

“Public diplomacy will be key to our reputation both inside and outside the Alliance.”²⁶⁰ The Alliance recognizes that in the 21st century it needs to connect with individuals and inform them of what NATO is, its role, and its value. As recently as 2017 NATO acknowledged that “in some Allied countries, over half of 18–24-year-olds haven’t even heard of NATO. Across all Allies, people with lower education levels are generally less likely to see NATO as relevant in maintaining peace and security, and almost a quarter of people believe NATO actually makes the world more dangerous.”²⁶¹ This is a serious problem given that NATO relies on the support of its members, democratic states, and that one of Russia’s propaganda themes is that NATO is aggressive and militaristic. It is also not different from during the Cold War when, as discussed in the Section A of this chapter, NATO information campaigns strove to mobilize support from the populace. Another need for a robust and continuous information campaign is NATO’s realization that “if we don’t tell our own story, others will tell it for us...and to make sure they [the billion people living within NATO] support and value us, we have to explain every day why NATO matters.”²⁶² The ceding of the NATO narrative to a third party is too risky: The best case is messaging that is favorable, but NATO has no control over the content or the coordination thus impacting its effectiveness. The worst case is a scenario where Russia or another power spreads propaganda harmful to the Alliance unchecked.

The view persists at NATO, like in the Cold War, that the Alliance does not generate propaganda. Robert Pszcel, former director of the NATO Information Office in Moscow, writes that “we [NATO] do not resort to propaganda, we stick to facts and open

²⁶⁰ Jaap de Hoop Scheffer, Press Statement by NATO Secretary General, Jaap de Hoop Scheffer, January 5, 2004, <https://www.nato.int/docu/speech/2004/s040105a.htm>.

²⁶¹ NATO, *NATO Brand Guide: A Practical Guide to Working with the NATO Brand* (Brussels, Belgium: NATO Public Diplomacy Division, 2017), 16, <https://shape.nato.int/resources/3/website/nato-brand.pdf>.

²⁶² NATO, 6.

debate.”²⁶³ NATO Spokesperson Oana Lungescu states that it is critical that the Alliance, an organization funded by taxpayers, must be open and truthful in its communications with the public.²⁶⁴ Propaganda, even of the white type, is seen as deceitful and not a tool of democracies. Thus, NATO refers to its efforts as public diplomacy.

The term public diplomacy originated from Ambassador Edmund Guillion, a U.S. diplomat, around 1965. At the time, he was dean at the Fletcher School of Law & Diplomacy at Tufts University. He sought to describe the process by which a government and its private citizens interact with and influence the citizens of other countries. Originally, he would have used the term propaganda as “it seemed like the nearest thing in the pure interpretation of the word to what we were doing. But ‘propaganda’ has always a pejorative connotation in this country. To describe the whole range of communications, information and propaganda, we hit upon ‘public diplomacy’.”²⁶⁵

Cull as well as scholar John Brown provide similar arguments as it pertains to public diplomacy. They argue that though public diplomacy and propaganda overlap with many similarities, key differences can be discerned. The former is truthful, objective, and usually involves two-way dialogue whereas propaganda selects facts, is biased, and is one-way. In addition, public diplomacy strives to learn from its audience to improve dialogue while propaganda desires feedback only to better target.²⁶⁶ Jowett and O’Donnell argue that the debate is still not settled as to whether public diplomacy is propaganda. They write

²⁶³ Robert Pszczel, “Dispelling a New Cold War: NATO Is Working to Combat Russian Disinformation,” Disinfo Portal, June 11, 2019, <https://disinfoportal.org/dispelling-a-new-cold-war-nato-is-working-to-combat-russian-disinformation/>.

²⁶⁴ Oana Lungescu, “Why Is Transparency so Important to NATO?,” NATO, July 12, 2019, http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/news_167784.htm.

²⁶⁵ Robert F. Delaney and John S. Gibson, eds., *American Public Diplomacy: The Perspective of Fifty Years* (Medford, MA: Tufts University, 1967), 31, as quoted in John Brown, “The Anti-Propaganda Tradition in the United States,” Bulletin Board for Peace, June 29, 2003, <http://www.publicdiplomacy.org/19.htm>.

²⁶⁶ Nicholas J. Cull, *Public Diplomacy: Foundations for Global Engagement in the Digital Age*, Kindle (Medford, MA: Polity Press, 2019), loc. 684–717 of 6807, Kindle; John Brown, “Public Diplomacy & Propaganda: Their Differences,” American Diplomacy, September 2008, <http://americandiplomacy.web.unc.edu/2008/09/public-diplomacy-propaganda-their-differences/>.

that there are strong similarities and shared characteristics. Yet, they find that dialogue and exchange of ideas found in some forms of public diplomacy prevent all public diplomacy from being labeled propaganda.²⁶⁷

A key for NATO is to increase the public's knowledge of NATO while promoting dialogue and understanding. The Alliance aims to disseminate information and learn from responses of the audience.²⁶⁸ Like in the Cold War, NATO realizes that the information campaigns need to be able to be tailored to specific Alliance countries or be disseminated on a pan-Alliance basis.²⁶⁹

2. NATO Methods of Propaganda

NATO's information efforts since 2014 are a mixture of strict public diplomacy and white propaganda that rely on NATO's Public Diplomacy Division (PDD) and support from the national efforts of member states. This determination of the difference of the two is based on a review of the arguments regarding public diplomacy and propaganda posited by the four scholars referenced in the previous subsection. Alliance messaging is white propaganda when it lacks the two-way exchange of ideas and meaningful dialogue.

The PDD is responsible for "engaging multiple audiences on the Alliance's policies and activities worldwide."²⁷⁰ It is the modern successor to NATIS. The PDD was created in 2003 from the merger of the Scientific and Environmental Affairs Division with the Office of Information and Press (OIP), itself formed in 1990 to assume the information outreach of NATO's Cold War efforts. Maronkova notes that NATO was the first

²⁶⁷ Jowett and O'Donnell, *Propaganda & Persuasion*, loc. 7872–7917 of 16608, Kindle.

²⁶⁸ "Communications and Public Diplomacy," NATO, June 20, 2016, http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/topics_69275.htm.

²⁶⁹ NATO Strategic Communications Team, *We Are NATO: Defence and Security Campaign Toolkit*, 1st ed. (Brussels, Belgium: NATO Public Diplomacy Division, 2017), 13–17, <https://www.act.nato.int/images/stories/structure/PA/nato-dsct.pdf>.

²⁷⁰ NATO, "International Staff," in *NATO Encyclopedia 2019* (Brussels, Belgium: NATO Public Diplomacy Division, 2019), https://www.nato.int/nato_static_fl2014/assets/pdf/2020/1/pdf/2019-nato-encyclopedia-eng.pdf.

international organization to create a division dedicated to public diplomacy.²⁷¹ Another vestige of the Cold War was replaced in 2004 when the Committee on Public Diplomacy (CPD) succeeded the CICR. The CPD continues as an advisory body to the NAC on issues concerning communications, media, and public engagement. It is also responsible for NATO's public diplomacy strategy.²⁷²

Last decade, NATO leadership realized they had a branding problem and that NATO was way behind in digital communications. In October 2007, then NATO Secretary General Jaap de Hoop Scheffer gave a speech on public diplomacy in which he referred to NATO as being in the “stone age” when it came to the Alliance's ability to communicate to the public in the new information environment.²⁷³ In 2015, Steven Mehringer, then Head of Communications Services at NATO, recounted that this speech was a seminal moment for NATO leadership. They recognized there was a serious problem and took steps to rectify it.²⁷⁴ A July 2008 article in *The New York Times* recounts how NATO hired a Coca-Cola executive to help revitalize the NATO brand in order to bolster support for the Alliance.²⁷⁵ In September 2014 the NATO Strategic Communications Centre of Excellence opened in Riga, Latvia with the mission to assist NATO allies and partners in improving strategic communications through research, seminars, and doctrine and policy development.²⁷⁶ In June 2017 NATO launched the #WeAreNATO campaign to highlight

²⁷¹ Barbora Maronkova, “NATO at 70: A Journey of Our History and Public Diplomacy,” USC Center on Public Diplomacy, April 4, 2019, <https://www.uscpublicdiplomacy.org/blog/nato-70-journey-our-history-and-public-diplomacy>.

²⁷² NATO, “Committee on Public Diplomacy (CPD),” in *NATO Encyclopedia 2019* (Brussels, Belgium: NATO Public Diplomacy Division, 2019), https://www.nato.int/nato_static_fl2014/assets/pdf/2020/1/pdf/2019-nato-encyclopedia-eng.pdf.

²⁷³ Jaap de Hoop Scheffer, “Speech by NATO Secretary General” (Speech, Seminar on “Public Diplomacy in NATO-led Operations,” Copenhagen, Denmark, October 8, 2007), <https://www.nato.int/docu/speech/2007/s071008a.html>.

²⁷⁴ “Engage Prague 2015-Interview with Steven Mehringer, NATO,” July 8, 2015, Zach Peterson, video, 8:11, https://www.youtube.com/watch?time_continue=92&v=0oLV7fhi11Q&feature=emb_logo.

²⁷⁵ Stephen Castle, “NATO Hires a Coke Executive to Retool Its Brand,” *The New York Times*, July 16, 2008, <https://www.nytimes.com/2008/07/16/world/europe/16nato.html>.

²⁷⁶ NATO Strategic Communications Centre of Excellence, “About Us.”

the contributions of all member states to maintaining the Alliance and the benefits emanating from Euro-Atlantic security.²⁷⁷ The NATO brand matters because it is how everyone outside the organization perceives NATO and helps them understand why NATO exists and why it is so valuable.

3. NATO Means of Propaganda

NATO utilizes multiple means to communicate with the public. These means of communication include utilization of publications, film, cooperation with private associations/non-governmental organizations, visits to NATO headquarters, and conferences. These were used by NATO during the Cold War and have been updated for the 21st century. The biggest difference from the Cold War lies in the usage of digital communications.

Publications include *NATO Review*, a free online magazine, that is the successor to the *NATO Letter*, a publication created shortly after the founding of NATIS.²⁷⁸ *NATO Review* examines NATO's role in the world today and discusses challenges such as disinformation, cyber security, climate change, etc.²⁷⁹ The Alliance also publishes online various reference material. Like in the Cold War these publications are targeted at different demographics. For example, NATO has posters and brochures aimed at adolescents to introduce them to the Alliance, whereas for journalists, academics, researchers, etc., items such as a NATO Encyclopedia, guides to NATO summits, and annual reports on the Alliance are produced by NATO. To support NATO's theme of transparency, many of NATO's publications from previous decades are available through an online archive.

Films continue to be a strong visual means of NATO conveying its messages to the public. Thanks to advances in technology, NATO does not have to rely on mobile

²⁷⁷ Jade Eckardt, "Agenda and MHP Launch Five-Year #WeAreNATO Campaign," *PRovoke*, June 8, 2017, <https://www.provokemedia.com/latest/article/agenda-and-mhp-launch-five-year-wearenato-campaign>.

²⁷⁸ Risso, *Propaganda and Intelligence in the Cold War*, 13, 16.

²⁷⁹ "About Us," *NATO Review*, accessed September 12, 2019, <https://www.nato.int/docu/review/about.html>.

exhibitions, gatherings, or theaters to show its films. The internet and associated technology enable NATO to share short films globally and maintain the catalogue online for users to browse and view at their leisure. Some of these shorts include a series supporting the Alliance's #WeAreNATO campaign. These film shorts showcase individual service members of NATO countries, the NATO member states themselves, and messages from NATO leadership.²⁸⁰ Another film series called NATO Experts has Alliance leaders answering critical questions such as how NATO makes the world safer.²⁸¹

NATO's relationships with private associations, NGOs, and think tanks throughout the Alliance provide NATO the ability to reach educators, researchers, and policy influencers. These bonds are strengthened through visits to NATO HQ as well as conferences. Maronkova describes this as assisting NATO experts and creating new ones and then fostering a network of them via the Alliances visitor programs and conferences. Thus, NATO has a sound group of individuals throughout the Alliance who can publicly and authoritatively support NATO in challenging times.²⁸²

The Alliance uses digital communications as a way to reach large audiences while gaining flexibility in messaging and rapidity in disseminating content. Mehringer in a 2015 interview described how poorly NATO was communicating online and the actions since 2007 to fix this problem.²⁸³ Today, NATO has an official presence on digital platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and YouTube. These platforms enable the outreach and dialogue components of public diplomacy that NATO embraces. The official accounts of NATO officials such as Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg and Spokesperson Oana Lungescu boost NATO's reach and amplify the intended message. All of these means help to reinforce NATO's brand and themes the Alliances wants the populace to absorb.

²⁸⁰ "NATO Videos," YouTube, NATO, 2020, https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCHIEaKbepQ_S9iIoZPKVQew.

²⁸¹ "NATO Experts," NATO, July 26, 2019, <http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/166322.htm>.

²⁸² Maronkova, "From Crawling to Walking: Progress in Evaluating the Effectiveness of Public Diplomacy: Lessons Learned from NATO," 22.

²⁸³ Peterson, "Engage Prague 2015-Interview with Steven Mehringer, NATO."

4. NATO Views of Russia

Since Russia's aggression in Georgia (2008) and especially following the Russian annexation of Crimea (2014) along with the continuing war in eastern Ukraine, NATO's view of Russia has become more critical, and the relationship has deteriorated. This is a change from the optimistic years of the 1990s and early 2000s, a time for repairing relations with Russia and former Warsaw Pact states. Admitting additional countries to NATO after the end of the Cold War was and is viewed as a positive and key to eliminating divisions between Western and Central and Eastern European nations. Alliance members recognized that Russia could be uneasy with this.²⁸⁴ There were attempts by NATO in the 1990s and early 2000s to involve Russia with the Alliance through the Partnership for Peace (1994), the NATO–Russia Founding Act (1997), and the NATO–Russia Council (2002). In addition, NATO in 1996 announced that it would not deploy nuclear weapons to the territory of new members.²⁸⁵ Yet, as discussed in Chapter II, this was not enough to alleviate Russian fear of the West.

Now the Alliance sees Russia as a state uninterested in meaningful dialogue with the West while the Kremlin seeks to undermine the Alliance and dominate countries found to reside within Russia's perceived sphere of influence. In April 2014, NATO's Deputy Secretary General Ambassador Alexander Vershbow gave a speech in which he stated that Russia had turned to "crude propaganda reminiscent of Stalin's times, rather than engaging in an honest debate and search for common ground."²⁸⁶ In the same speech Vershbow said Putin fears stable democracies that could provide an unflattering contrast to his authoritarian system. Thus, Putin seeks to stymie them through the creation of a Russian

²⁸⁴ Lawrence Freedman, "Ukraine and the Art of Crisis Management," *Survival* 56, no. 3 (May 4, 2014): 15, <https://doi.org/10.1080/00396338.2014.920143>.

²⁸⁵ Michael Rühle, "NATO Enlargement and Russia: Myths and Realities," NATO Review, July 1, 2014, <https://www.nato.int/docu/review/articles/2014/07/01/nato-enlargement-and-russia-myths-and-realities/index.html>.

²⁸⁶ Alexander Vershbow, "A New Strategic Reality in Europe" (Speech, 21st International Conference on Euro-Atlantic Security, Krakow, Poland, April 4, 2014), http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/opinions_108889.htm.

sphere of influence in Eurasia. When this is not enough, Russia resorts to destabilizing uncooperative states through material support to separatist groups and enabling frozen conflicts.²⁸⁷ NATO provides a bulwark to Russian aggression against smaller Alliance members through NATO's collective security. This makes NATO a target and the Alliance realizes that Russia seeks to destabilize and divide NATO. Dr. Kęstutis Paulauskas writes that "Cold War opponents [NATO and the USSR] were status-quo powers, invested in maintaining strategic stability. Today's potential adversaries are deliberately seeking to undermine and ultimately destroy the Euro-Atlantic security architecture."²⁸⁸ The Alliance recognizes that today's Russia is a fundamental threat to the integrity of NATO.

5. NATO Goals of Propaganda

The goals of NATO's public diplomacy efforts since 2014 are similar to the Alliance goals discussed in Section A of this chapter with one main difference. The similar goals are to increase the public's knowledge about NATO and bolster and broaden support for the Alliance. The major goal that is different is that the Alliance strives to confront and counter Russian anti-NATO propaganda.

NATO seeks to inform the public about the Alliance, its programs, initiatives, and military exercises. For example, in early 2019 Allied Joint Force Command Naples - NATO hosted a visit by researchers and journalists from Serbia. The visit allowed for dialogue regarding the role of NATO in the Balkans. In addition, it provided information on and insight into NATO that these researchers and journalists can share with a larger audience back in Serbia.²⁸⁹ NATO must also convey through its information efforts the Alliance's value and core values in order to maintain public support and increase it. Events

²⁸⁷ Vershbow.

²⁸⁸ Kęstutis Paulauskas, "The Alliance's Evolving Posture: Towards a Theory of Everything," NATO Review, July 6, 2018, <https://www.nato.int/docu/review/articles/2018/07/06/the-alliances-evolving-posture-towards-a-theory-of-everything/index.html>.

²⁸⁹ "BCSP through Co-Operation with Journalists Informs Citizens about NATO's Role in the Region," Belgrade Centre for Security Policy, February 1, 2019, <http://www.bezbednost.org/BCSP-News/6983/BCSP-through-CoOperation-with-Journalists.shtml>.

like the Alliance sponsored all-day town hall, NATO Engages, held the day before the December 2019 NATO Leaders Summit in London, work to convey “NATO’s enduring value in meeting these challenges [hybrid conflict, disinformation, cyber security, and great power competition].”²⁹⁰ In addition, national information efforts can assist NATO to achieve its public diplomacy goals, like Croatian Prime Minister Andrej Plenkovic’s recent statement: “membership of NATO and its Article 5 give us that key umbrella of collective security which in future, and today as well, will prevent any aggression against Croatia such as the one we had in the early 90s.”²⁹¹

Since 2014 and the increase in anti-NATO propaganda disseminated by Russia, NATO has sought to engage and counter Russia’s propaganda assault with the Alliance’s public diplomacy. Maronkova writes that “NATO is determined to counter propaganda not with propaganda, but with facts.”²⁹² NATO has a webpage that is regularly updated that lists anti-NATO claims of Russian officials and then refutes these falsehoods.²⁹³ Maronkova points out that NATO personnel are very active on social media and regularly use it to highlight Russian propaganda and then provide facts to disarm it.²⁹⁴

6. NATO Themes of Propaganda

The main themes in NATO public diplomacy efforts are the values NATO embodies, the benefits of NATO, and the relevancy of the Alliance today. These themes are similar to those found in NATO propaganda of the Cold War minus the existential threat of the Soviet Union. Values that are portrayed include peace, democracy, freedom, cooperation, and unity (especially in the form of the transatlantic bond). There is also a

²⁹⁰ NATO Public Diplomacy Division, “About NATO Engages,” NATO Engages: Innovating the Alliance, December 4, 2019, <https://nato-engages.org/about/>.

²⁹¹ “PM: Army Guarantees Croatia’s Security, NATO Offers Umbrella of Collective Security,” Government of the Republic of Croatia, December 3, 2019, <https://vlada.gov.hr/news/pm-army-guarantees-croatia-s-security-nato-offers-umbrella-of-collective-security/28340>.

²⁹² Maronkova, “Countering Russian Propaganda.”

²⁹³ North Atlantic Treaty Organization, “NATO-Russia Relations.”

²⁹⁴ Maronkova, “Countering Russian Propaganda”; Maronkova, “From Crawling to Walking: Progress in Evaluating the Effectiveness of Public Diplomacy: Lessons Learned from NATO,” 22–23.

focus on themes of dialogue and transparency that provide further counterpoints to Russian propaganda accusing NATO of aggressiveness and warmongering.

The resurgence of Russia and the concern of NATO members especially along the Alliance's border with Russia can explain the themes of collective defense and deterrence appearing in Alliance information efforts. Coupled with these themes is the reinforcement of the need to devote sufficient funds to provide for this security. Other benefits such as the stability and prosperity that NATO engenders are also featured.

Lastly, messaging includes not only the need for the Alliance today, but also that NATO is flexible and agile enough to adapt to changing and emerging challenges of the 21st century such as cyber security.

7. NATO Visual Propaganda Analysis

This section contains a selection for visual pieces to provide the reader with an overview of NATO public diplomacy efforts since 2014. The selection consists of eight pieces: a couple of photographs, four short films, and two Tweets. Though NATO utilizes additional mediums of communications to convey its messages and themes these best represent what NATO relies on to reach the public.

This first photograph, Figure 23, is posted to NATO's official Instagram account and shows the complement of Standing NATO Mine Countermeasures Group Two (SNMCMG2). The four Standing Maritime Groups are integrated naval forces comprised of NATO members that give the Alliance an "immediate operational response capability both in peacetime and in crisis."²⁹⁵ The photograph shows the warships of SNMCMG2 rafted together with the ships' companies in formation on deck. The photo conveys the themes of unity and cooperation while valuing individuality. The nations of the Alliance have brought their separate capabilities (equipment and personnel) together to operate as an integrated force. The nations maintain their pride as seen by each state's national flag,

²⁹⁵ "Maritime Groups," Allied Maritime Command, NATO, accessed January 23, 2020, <https://mc.nato.int/missions/maritime-groups>.

but the viewer is reminded that they have come together to enjoy the benefits of collective defense.



Figure 23. Crews from Four Alliance Navies Patrol Together.²⁹⁶

The second photo, Figure 24, posted to NATO's official Flickr account is of the Oxford Philharmonic Orchestra performing in the Agora of the new NATO Headquarters on November 6, 2019. The depiction of the photo is very different from many of NATO's recent photographs that tend to feature either martial subjects or the political side of the Alliance. This photograph highlights NATO's values of unity, cooperation, and cultural appreciation. The picture (and the concert) shows that NATO is more than a military alliance. In the foreground is the orchestra, and the audience comprised of military personnel and civilians stretches into the distance of the frame. The creator of the event, Director Bogdan Lazaroae of the NATO Headquarters Project Office and Transition Office, summed up the importance of NATO holding this concert when he said:

Art, in all its forms, is a universal language that transcends cultures, spoken languages, disagreements and difference. Art is something we can all coalesce around and have a common experience that will help us all set

²⁹⁶ Source: NATO, *Crews from the UK, Italy, Spain, and Turkey and Staff of Standing NATO Mine Countermeasures Group Two (SNMCMG2) Stand with the Scientists from Centre for Maritime Research and Experimentation*, June 1, 2018, Photograph, <https://www.instagram.com/p/BjeglLxDLty/>.

aside our differences and live what is in front of us. This concert brought us all together in a magnificent space and reminded us of our purpose in this building and the staying power of the Alliance over the last 70 years.²⁹⁷

The imagery reinforces in the viewer's mind the linkage between civilians and the armed forces and civilian control of them in a democracy, another value of NATO. In addition, the photograph associates NATO with European culture and demonstrates that NATO values such culture and has helped defend it and the Euro-Atlantic way of life for 70 years.



Figure 24. NATO Celebrates 70th Anniversary of the Alliance with Music.²⁹⁸

The image, Figure 25, is adapted from a short film entitled *NATO's 70th Anniversary Year – A Look Back*. The film is featured on NATO's official Facebook page and hosted on its YouTube channel. This demonstrates NATO's usage of two different digital platforms to uniquely display content and drive traffic through crosspollination.

²⁹⁷ Bogdan Lazaroae, quoted in Barbora Maronkova, "A Night in the NATO Agora," USC Center on Public Diplomacy, December 9, 2019, <https://www.uscpublicdiplomacy.org/blog/night-nato-agora>.

²⁹⁸ Source: NATO, *The Oxford Philharmonic Orchestra Performs in the Agora of NATO Headquarters*, November 6, 2019, Photograph, 2200px x 1467px, <https://www.flickr.com/photos/nato/49028280247/>.

Figure 25 strongly conveys the theme of unity. Here on this stage are the political leaders of the Alliance. They may disagree on many points as may their countries, but here they stand united by the Alliance because they recognize the benefits militarily, politically, and economically.

The film itself is a compilation of multiple clips backed by rousing orchestral music. The film reflects on NATO's celebration of its past 70 years as well as other significant events and moments of 2019. It opens with a clip of NATO Secretary General Stoltenberg remarking on how much progress NATO has made together over the last 20 years. The footage throughout the film is overlaid with text banners such as the one seen in Figure 25. They flow together and combined with the footage convey NATO's values and benefits. The emphasis throughout is on cooperation, teamwork, and purpose that generate strength and innovation. The film reminds viewers that NATO is not only about the Euro-Atlantic framework, but that NATO seeks to work with partners around the world. One of the central tenets of the Alliance, collective security, is focused on with the words "We came together and renewed our solemn commitment to each other that an attack against one Ally is an attack against us all."²⁹⁹ At the closing of the film, the viewer is given a final reminder as to the value of NATO: the final footage is of NATO Secretary General Stoltenberg speaking before a joint meeting of the United States Congress on April 3, 2019, where he says "Madam Speaker, Mr. Vice President, it is good to have friends."³⁰⁰ This is a simple yet powerful analogy that everyone can relate to.

²⁹⁹ "NATO's 70th Anniversary Year – A Look Back," December 27, 2019, NATO, video, 1:45, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=x-Tf3jVH_jg.

³⁰⁰ Jens Stoltenberg, "NATO: Good for Europe and Good for America" (Speech, Joint Meeting of United States Congress, Washington, DC, April 3, 2019), http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/opinions_165210.htm.



Figure 25. Leaders of Europe and North America United by NATO.³⁰¹

The image, Figure 26 is adapted from the short film *Defending the East of the Alliance – NATO's enhanced Forward Presence*. It is posted to NATO's official YouTube channel. The objective of the film is to explain what NATO's enhanced Forward Presence (eFP) is and why it is necessary. Themes of solidarity, purpose, and NATO's relevancy appear throughout the film. Footage of Alliance military vehicles and troops being deployed via ships, trains, and aircraft are mixed with live fire exercises and troops on maneuvers. Context is provided by a narrator, President Dalia Grybauskaitė of Lithuania, President Kersti Kaljulaid of Estonia, and NATO Secretary General Stoltenberg. The presidents explain that eFP is needed because Russia does not respect international agreements, seeks to upend the international value-based world order, and wants to reassert influence over the Baltic States like the USSR had. The film is well produced with the film imagery complementing the dialogue spoken over it. The soundtrack fits the mood of the narrative. It is somber and serious when discussing the Soviet occupation of the Baltic States and the current behavior of Russia. The music amps up during scenes of NATO military forces in action and is uplifting when the narrative discusses the details of eFP. Secretary General Stoltenberg closes the film by stating that NATO does not desire a new Cold War and instead NATO seeks dialogue with Russia, but NATO must convey a clear message of strength so Russia does not miscalculate the Alliance's resolve. He concludes

³⁰¹ Adapted from NATO, "NATO's 70th Anniversary Year – A Look Back."

by saying “NATO stands as one for all, all for one. That’s the best way to conflict.”³⁰² This counters the Russian propaganda theme that NATO is aggressive and desires war.

Figure 26 is representative of the many scenes of military personnel and weapons of war in action. In this image is displayed a tangible commitment of NATO combat power. The unit appears to be British Army as one can identify in the foreground a FV107 Scimitar, a British Army armored reconnaissance vehicle, a Land Rover Defender, and a number of all-terrain vehicles. In the middle ground rests a column of five Warrior armored vehicles used by the British Army. At least two variants are present, while in the background and in the distance are numerous military vehicles of various types. There is also a flag that might be battalion or regimental colors, but they are not identifiable. The British Army deployed approximately 800 troops to Estonia and led the eFP in 2017.³⁰³



Figure 26. Biggest Reinforcement of Collective Defense in a Generation.³⁰⁴

³⁰² "Defending the East of the Alliance – NATO’s Enhanced Forward Presence," August 23, 2017, NATO, video, 5:21, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YnDNOMbu0bg&list=PL_vlwQEsZAbwhVLERffP0VfUWMIj3wW6s&index=7&t=0s.

³⁰³ NATO Public Diplomacy Division, “NATO’s Enhanced Forward Presence,” Factsheet (Brussels, Belgium: North Atlantic Treaty Organization, May 2017), 1, https://www.nato.int/nato_static_fl2014/assets/pdf/pdf_2017_05/1705-factsheet-efp.pdf.

³⁰⁴ Adapted from NATO, "Defending the East of the Alliance – NATO’s Enhanced Forward Presence."

The image, Figure 27, is adapted from the short film *The Spanish “Lady Hawk.”* It is posted to NATO’s official YouTube channel and prompted on NATO’s website. This short is one of a series of films created for the #WeAreNATO campaign. The films are a mix of shorts focusing on a NATO member country or on an individual from one of these such as a Romanian fighter pilot, a U.S. paratrooper, or an Italian oceanographer. The film series seeks to educate viewers and encourage a positive outlook on NATO. The country shorts do this through a focus on the contributions of the particular Alliance country discussed as well as the benefits of NATO to that state. The films focused on an individual utilize interesting, passionate, and likeable subjects to promote a sense of the positive, hardworking, and principled people contributing to NATO. Some of these films take an even more humanistic approach. The Italian oceanographer, a civilian working for NATO, describes painting in her free time as well as her love for the sea that she hopes to share with her future child. In another film a Polish soldier serving in an armored unit describes his love of the army and for riding motorcycles.

Figure 27 depicts Corporal Nuria Gallego Josere of the 7th Light Infantry Brigade “Galicia” of the Spanish Army along with the brigade’s mascot, a female hawk named Patriot. The image portrays the falconer standing at attention with her hawk. Just visible along her back is slung her loaded service rifle, a Heckler & Koch G36, a reminder to the viewer along with her uniform that Corporal Josere is still a soldier though she has a unique job. This also calls to mind the brochure associated with Figure 5 featuring women serving in NATO. Here is a female soldier, armed, and out in the field with her fellow soldiers.

The short film is composed of clips of Corporal Josere, a falconer, training Patriot while she describes her duties as requiring great dedication and time but that her job is very rewarding. It is clear that there is a form of teamwork between falconer and hawk. The brigade’s mascot is fitting as the coat of arms of the brigade includes a diving falcon or hawk with outstretched talons. In addition, the motto of the brigade is “Honor from the

past; Pride from the Present”³⁰⁵ This short film conveys the message that the Spanish Army and by association NATO value history, teamwork, and culture.



Figure 27. A Spanish Infantry Brigade’s Falconer and Unit Mascot.³⁰⁶

The image, Figure 28, is adapted from the short docudrama *Forest Brothers - Fight for the Baltics*. It is posted to NATO’s official YouTube channel. *Forest Brothers* tells the story of soldiers from the Baltic States and the civilians who aided them in resisting the Soviet occupation. Once it became apparent that the Soviet Union was not withdrawing after the Second World War, soldiers from the Baltic States took to the forests and rural areas and organized a resistance. They fought until 1953, though some held on into the 1980s. The docudrama mixes clips of reenactors ambushing a Soviet Army patrol in the forest with interviews of former partisans and civilian supporters. The film connects to the present by showing footage of Lithuanian special forces with commentary from one of these special forces soldiers. He describes how the special forces of the Baltic States trace their lineage to the Forest Brothers. In addition, he shows a rocker tab patch on his uniform that reads *ZALIUKAS* and explains that it means someone who blends into the forest, a

³⁰⁵ Spanish Army, “VII Light Infantry Brigade ‘Galcia,’” Factsheet (Pontevedra, Spain: Spanish Ministry of Defense, May 13, 2016), 1, https://jfcbs.nato.int/systems/file_download.ashx?pg=1646&ver=1.

³⁰⁶ Adapted from “The Spanish ‘Lady Hawk,’” May 31, 2017, NATO, video, 1:00, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yBrRM-c-YWI>.

Forest Brother. Figure 28 is representative of these clips. It shows this small special forces detachment appearing intimidating and capable as they patrol through the forest.

NATO is not mentioned at all in the docudrama though the NATO logo appears in the bottom right and finally at the very end of the film. However, the purpose of the film is to inform the public and celebrate this history of resistance to the Soviet occupation of the Baltic States. The linkage to the modern special forces of these countries sends a reminder to the viewer that the elite soldiers of today have inherited this legacy and are ready to return to the forests if necessary.

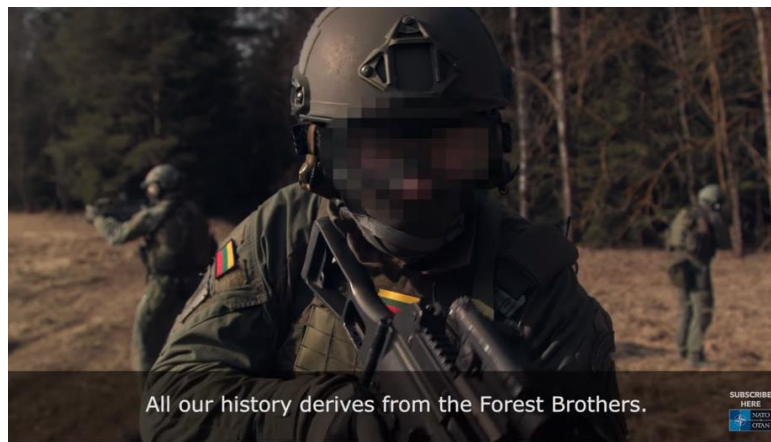


Figure 28. Baltic States' Special Forces: Heirs to the Forest Brothers.³⁰⁷

The image, Figure 29, is of a post by NATO Press Secretary Oana Lungescu to the social media platform Twitter on June 28, 2017. The post shows how NATO directly confronts and counters Russian anti-NATO propaganda. This is enabled by modern communications technology and by NATO choosing to maintain a digital presence. In the post Lungescu replies to a post by the Russian Embassy in the UK stating that NATO troops do not belong in Eastern Europe. The Russian post includes a cartoon showing tanks with NATO flags on the EU–Russian border. A tank commander pronounces that the threat lies ahead while pointing to a shocked Russian man and his dog. Not only does Lungescu

³⁰⁷ Adapted from "Forest Brothers - Fight for the Baltics," July 11, 2017, NATO, video, 8:07, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=h5rQFp7FF9c>.

refute the Russian propaganda by saying NATO forces were welcome by the Eastern European countries, but she points out the irony of the Russian claim given that Russia is occupying parts of three European countries.



Figure 29. NATO Press Secretary Counters Russian Propaganda.³⁰⁸

The image, Figure 30, depicts another post by Lungescu to the official NATO Press Secretary account on Twitter on October 26, 2018. This post, like Figure 29, reinforces that NATO is willing and able to counter Russian propaganda. Lungescu's post does not refute a specific piece of Russian propaganda but replies to wider Russian claims that military maneuvers and training associated with the NATO Trident Juncture 2018 exercise prove that the Alliance is aggressive and seeks conflict with Russia. Lungescu uses text and a

³⁰⁸ Source: Oana Lungescu (@NATOPress), "@RussianEmbassy @natomission_ru #NATO Troops in Allied Countries @ Their Invitation. No Comparison w #Russia Troops Which #Ukraine #Georgia & #Moldova Want out.," Twitter, June 28, 2017, 6:29 a.m., <https://twitter.com/natopress/status/880055552969236485>.

map graphic to soundly refute this propaganda. It is clear that the military exercise is not taking place anywhere near Russia.



Figure 30. NATO Press Secretary Exposes Russian Propaganda.³⁰⁹

C. CONCLUSION

The North Atlantic Treaty Organization recognizes the value and importance of propaganda and public diplomacy. NATO did so during the Cold War, but its extent and reach were limited by mandate, resources, and technology. In that period NATO developed and coordinated information campaigns focusing on the values and benefits of NATO and left most of the dissemination to the national information services of Alliance members. In addition, the rebuttal of Soviet anti-NATO and anti-Western propaganda was left up to those same national services. Today NATO is more sophisticated in using propaganda and

³⁰⁹ Source: Oana Lungescu (@NATOpres), "#Russian Officials Seem Confused about Geography. #TridentJuncture Takes Place on the Territory of a #NATO Country, and the Core of the Exercise Is 1000km from the Russian Border," Twitter, October 26, 2018, 6:18 a.m., <https://twitter.com/natopress/status/1055810869265874950>.

public diplomacy to disseminate NATO's message and in confronting anti-NATO propaganda and countering Russian claims. The embrace of public diplomacy, new communications technologies, and a focus on NATO's brand enables the Alliance to deliver much more assertive, sophisticated, coordinated, and rapid propaganda.

IV. CASE STUDIES

These two brief case studies provide additional evidence of Russian anti-NATO propaganda as well as NATO efforts to counter it and bolster the Alliance. Each case study follows a similar format with a brief overview of the military exercise or policy followed by sections providing summaries of both Russian anti-NATO propaganda and NATO public diplomacy linked to the exercise or policy. The first case study looks at the Russian and Belarusian military exercise, Zapad 2017. The second concerns NATO's Trident Juncture 2018 exercise.

A. ZAPAD 2017

1. Overview of Zapad 2017 Exercise

Zapad 2017 was a joint exercise that was conducted by Russia and Belarus from September 14 to 20, 2017. According to the Russian government the exercise consisted of approximately 12,700 personnel, 680 vehicles, 70 planes and helicopters, and 10 warships. Zapad took place in areas of Belarus as well as in the Leningrad and Pskov regions and Kaliningrad enclave. The scenario had extremist groups, supplied by a foreign third party, infiltrate and attempt to destabilize Kaliningrad and parts of Belarus. The purpose of the exercise was to test the joint Russian and Belarussian forces' command and control, mobility, and conflict escalation in responding to this externally supported insurgency. The Russian government maintained the exercise was defensive and did not target any foreign nations.³¹⁰ Researcher Lukas Andriukaitis provides additional information on the scenario and notes that the three fictional hostile countries created for the exercise include territory of Poland, Lithuania, and Latvia. In addition, the main adversary country comprises large portions of Belarussian territory that in reality supported President Alexander

³¹⁰ "Zapad 2017 Jointed Strategic Exercise," Ministry of Defence of the Russian Federation, 2017, <https://eng.mil.ru/en/mission/practice/more.htm?id=12140115@egNews>.

Lukashenko's opponent in the 1994 elections, have a high concentration of Roman Catholics, and have other cultural and historical links with Poland and Lithuania.³¹¹

The exercise did spark international controversy over both its size and Russian intentions. In the months prior to Zapad NATO officials and government officials of NATO countries expressed concerns. These included questioning Russia's official data on exercise participants believing Russia to be underestimating in order to avoid Organization for Security Co-operation in Europe's (OSCE) Vienna Document requirements as well as whether Russia would leave troops deployed close to its borders with NATO countries.³¹² Scholar Roger McDermott in a post-Zapad review concludes that the official Russia claim to be "below the 13,000 threshold [of the OSCE Vienna Document] are certainly false."³¹³ Senior research scientist Michael Kofman provides a similar conclusion and estimates that approximately 45,000 personnel participated in Zapad. He also notes that Zapad, though officially only seven days, was actually a "training capstone amidst a high tempo of annual qualification checks, missile tests, and a host of other drills taking place in the Russian armed forces."³¹⁴

³¹¹ Lukas Andriukaitis, "#ZapadWatch: Viejšnoryja — The Land of Free Belarusians," @DFRLab, September 11, 2017, <https://medium.com/dfrlab/zapadwatch-viej%C5%A1noryja-the-land-of-free-belarusians-flb75195a2cb>.

³¹² "Stoltenberg Asks Russia to Allow NATO Observers to Inspect at Zapad-2017 Drills," Interfax-Ukraine, July 13, 2017, <https://en.interfax.com.ua/news/general/435990.html>; Andrea Shalal, "U.S. General Says Allies Worry Russian War Game May Be 'Trojan Horse,'" Reuters, July 20, 2017, <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-russia-nato-usa-idUSKBN1A52WO>; Radio Poland, "Poland, NATO Watch as Moscow, Minsk Prep for War Games," Polskie Radio dla Zagranicy, August 8, 2017, <http://archiwum.thenews.pl/1/10/Artykul/321873,Poland-NATO-watch-as-Moscow-Minsk-prep-for-war-games>; Damien Sharkov, "Is Russia's Western Wargame a Cover to Drop Troops on Europe's Borders?," *Newsweek*, August 23, 2017, <https://www.newsweek.com/russia-using-belarus-wargame-deploy-permanent-units-along-polish-border-653865>.

³¹³ Roger McDermott, "Zapad 2017: Myth and Reality," *Eurasia Daily Monitor*, October 10, 2017, <https://jamestown.org/program/zapad-2017-myth-reality/>.

³¹⁴ Michael Kofman, "Zapad 2017: Beyond the Hype, Important Lessons for the U.S. and NATO," European Leadership Network, October 27, 2017, <https://www.europeanleadershipnetwork.org/commentary/zapad-2017-beyond-the-hype-important-lessons-for-the-us-and-nato/>.

2. Russian Propaganda about Zapad 2017

Russian anti-NATO propaganda connected with Zapad 2017 focused on portraying NATO as aggressive and overreacting to Russia, that the Zapad was defensive and Russia is peaceful, and that Russia is transparent (unlike NATO). These themes appeared separately as well as together in various forms of Russian propaganda including official statements, Russian media, and social media posts.

Sputnik articles in August 2017 provide insight into the initial propaganda campaign as they relate NATO's concern over Zapad 2017 as well as the invitation by Russia and Belarus to attend visitor events.³¹⁵ Here one can see the narrative being framed as NATO worried and Russia being transparent. As the exercise began the propaganda narrative begins to change. An RT article claimed to provide facts to combat hysteria regarding Zapad. The article recounts the official numbers of troops and equipment and then details estimates by NATO and non-NATO countries to show them as wildly exaggerated. The piece also promotes the theme that Zapad is defensive in nature and that Russia and Belarus have been completely transparent. The article closes by recounting NATO exercises including numbers of troops participating as a means to show that it is NATO that is being aggressive.³¹⁶ A second RT article is an example of the propaganda narrative expanding to attack another concern raised by some NATO members: that Russia might leave troops and equipment in Belarus. It seeks to undermine the credibility of Alliance members. In the piece, RT points out that no troops were left behind and even uses comments from NATO Secretary General Stoltenberg to illustrate it. Then the article closes by claiming that Zapad demonstrated a high level of transparency and that NATO is hypocritical due to it holding "massive parallel military exercises in Sweden, which involved almost twice as many troops as the Russian-Belarus drills and became the largest

³¹⁵ "NATO Concerned Over Scale of Russia-Belarus Zapad-2017 Drills - Polish FM," Sputnik, August 25, 2017, <https://sputniknews.com/europe/201708251056791366-russia-belarus-drills-nato/>; "NATO to Send Experts to Russia-Belarus Zapad-2017 Drills After Invitation," Sputnik, August 30, 2017, <https://sputniknews.com/military/201708301056925949-russia-belarus-nato-zapad-drills/>.

³¹⁶ "Facts vs Hysteria: What You Need to Know About Zapad 2017 Drills," RT, September 14, 2017, <https://www.rt.com/news/403324-zapad-2017-drills-facts/>.

military event Sweden hosted in 23 years.”³¹⁷ Articles disseminated by TASS also portrayed NATO as overreacting, Russia as concerned with security for all countries in Eurasia and Europe, and that NATO maintains an aggressive stance in the Baltic States and Central Europe.³¹⁸ Russia also used social media such as a post to the official Twitter account of the Russian Embassy in the U.S. that mocked concerns regarding Zapad 2017 and linked to a Facebook post containing Russian messaging on the exercise including that the West generated hysteria over Zapad in order to justify large-scale military exercises in the Baltic region.³¹⁹

3. NATO Propaganda about Zapad 2017

NATO public diplomacy efforts sought to stress the need for transparency in military exercises in Europe while also pointing out the destabilizing effect of Russia’s behavior. In the months after the exercise NATO information efforts countered Russia’s official estimate of participants and claims of transparency. NATO Secretary General Stoltenberg made clear to Russian representatives at a NATO–Russia Council meeting in late October 2017 that Zapad exceeded official Russian estimates in both geography and troop numbers. This message was also shared with global press.³²⁰ In December a *NATO Review* article stated that “Russia has used its strategic exercises and large-scale snap exercises to hone its military capabilities, undermine regional stability and peace — twice, first in Georgia and then Ukraine — to mask impending aggression. Exercise ZAPAD 2017

³¹⁷ “No Evidence of Russian Troops Left Behind in Belarus After Zapad 2017 Drills — NATO Chief,” RT, October 26, 2017, <https://www.rt.com/news/407893-zapad-drills-nato-no-troops/>.

³¹⁸ “NATO Accuses Russia of Underreporting ‘Real’ Number of Zapad-2017 Drill Participants,” TASS, October 26, 2017, <https://tass.com/defense/972721>; “Top Diplomat Says NATO’s Allegations About Zapad-2017 Drills Turn Out to Be False,” TASS, November 20, 2017, <https://tass.com/politics/976434>.

³¹⁹ Russia in USA (@RusEmbUSA), “We Hope That the Recent Victims of #Zapad2017 Syndrome Will Have Enough Time to Overcome It until 2019 #stratcomdc,” Twitter, September 26, 2017, 7:18 p.m., <https://twitter.com/rusembusa/status/912863942518689793>.

³²⁰ Jens Stoltenberg, “Press Point Following the Meeting of the NATO-Russia Council” (Press Briefing, NATO-Russia Council Meeting, Brussels, Belgium, October 26, 2017), http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/opinions_147976.htm; Robin Emmott, “NATO Says Russia Misled West Over Scale of Zapad War Games,” Reuters, October 26, 2017, <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-nato-russia-idUSKBN1CV2K4>.

was the latest iteration of such exercises.”³²¹ The article maintains and gives examples that since 2008, Russia has consistently underestimated its official troop counts in order to limit the presence of international observers. An investigation of Russian propaganda during Zapad 2017 by the Atlantic Council’s Digital Forensic Research Lab exposed false claims of Russian transparency and NATO aggression. This piece provides an example of NATO countering Russian propaganda by using associated organizations.³²² This maintained consistency with and reinforced NATO messaging via social media before and during the exercise that Russia was spreading disinformation about Zapad and not being transparent.³²³

B. TRIDENT JUNCTURE 2018

1. Overview of Trident Juncture 2018 Exercise

Trident Juncture 2018 was a NATO exercise that took place from October 25 to November 7, 2018. NATO members and partner nations contributed 50,000 personnel, 10,000 vehicles, 250 planes, and 65 ships to the exercise. Norway hosted Trident Juncture with the exercise utilizing: Norwegian land, territorial waters, and airspace; the Norwegian Sea; Swedish airspace; and a part of the Baltic Sea bordered by Poland, Germany, Denmark, and Sweden. The purpose of Trident Juncture was to test, via an Article 5 scenario, NATO’s ability to wage a large-scale defensive operation in the air, on land, at sea, and in cyberspace.³²⁴ This military exercise was the one of the largest ever conducted

³²¹ Dave Johnson, “ZAPAD 2017 and Euro-Atlantic Security,” NATO Review, December 14, 2017, <https://www.nato.int/docu/review/articles/2017/12/14/zapad-2017-and-euro-atlantic-security/index.html>.

³²² Donara Barojan, “#BalticBrief: Russia Claims Secret NATO Deployment,” @DFRLab, December 18, 2017, <https://medium.com/dfrlab/balticbrief-russia-claims-secret-nato-deployment-e6c0e649ccfb>.

³²³ Oana Lungescu (@NATOPress), “Worth Reading @CEPA Report on Pro-Kremlin Media Spreading Disinformation on #Zapad2017 in #Lithuania,” Twitter, August 29, 2017, 1:54 a.m., <https://twitter.com/natopress/status/902454519988146177>; Oana Lungescu (@NATOPress), “#NATO SG @jensstoltenberg on #Zapad2017: Every Nation Has the Right to Exercise Its Forces, but in a Transparent Way,” Twitter, September 14, 2017, 3:31 a.m., <https://twitter.com/natopress/status/908276964196323329>.

³²⁴ “Trident Juncture 2018,” NATO, October 29, 2018, <http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/157833.htm>.

in Norway and the largest one NATO has conducted in over 20 years.³²⁵ An exercise the size of Trident Juncture was important for NATO because it tested on a large scale myriad capabilities from planning to logistics to warfighting. The selection of Norway presented a challenging environment for NATO to operate in due to its rugged terrain as well as its range of climate and weather. In addition, it was an opportunity to see how Norway could handle such an influx of Alliance personnel and material and whether Norwegian civil and military authorities could work together efficiently to facilitate the rapid ingress and distribution of the Alliance reinforcements. For NATO to operate and succeed in such an exercise was a vital demonstration to Alliance members, partners, and to states like Russia that NATO has the ability and the capacity to come to the defense of an attacked NATO member no matter the environment. This is a critical message to send.

2. Russian Propaganda Concerning Trident Juncture 2018

Russian anti-NATO propaganda during the period of Trident Juncture 2018 contained familiar themes: NATO as the aggressor, divisions within the Alliance, and that Russia seeks peace and is the victim of a vengeful West. Some of these themes appear in the same piece of propaganda to magnify the message while others focus on a single theme. Unsurprisingly, some of the propaganda clearly contradicts other Russian propaganda such as some material claiming NATO is aggressive and warmongering while other propaganda portrays the armed forces of the Alliance's members as weak, poorly equipped, and even incompetent.

There are numerous pieces of Russian anti-NATO propaganda focusing on Trident Juncture. In October 2018 RT published two articles in English relating to the exercise. One discussed the U.S. contribution of the USS Harry S. Truman Carrier Strike Group to the NATO exercise and used this as a major example of how the U.S. and NATO are militarizing the Arctic. The piece closed by portraying Russia as the aggrieved party by

³²⁵ "Trident Juncture 18," Forsvaret, Norwegian Armed Forces, October 27, 2018, <http://forsvaret.no/en/exercise-and-operations/exercises/nato-exercise-2018>; Jonathan Masters, "NATO's Trident Juncture Exercises: What to Know," Council on Foreign Relations, October 23, 2018, <https://www.cfr.org/in-brief/natos-trident-juncture-exercises-what-know>.

describing the aforementioned militarization to be occurring on “its doorstep” and that such actions by NATO are destabilizing the whole region.³²⁶ The other article again utilizes the Arctic and its protentional natural resources and transport routes to frame the discussion. According to the propaganda, these are the reasons NATO is holding an exercise like Trident Juncture. The Alliance states that it is not targeting Russia, but according to RT, it really is as NATO seeks to seize the treasures of the Arctic and exclude Russia.³²⁷ This propaganda theme of resource greed driving NATO aggression also appeared as an assertion as to why Finland, a NATO partner, participated in Trident Juncture. According to Russia, Finland desires Arctic territory.³²⁸ A Sputnik piece from late October 2018 described Trident Juncture as clearly anti-Russian, that NATO was not transparent in providing information, and that NATO behaves in an aggressive manner. The article is led by a photo of two U.S. M1 Abrams main battle tanks firing their main guns.³²⁹

A press release from the Russian Embassy in Norway combined the themes of NATO warmongering and the Alliance being a vassal of the U.S. with a purpose of causing division amongst Alliance members. The document portrayed the Alliance as hypocritical in that NATO claims to prepare to counter all threats while exercises like Trident Juncture make it clear NATO is focused on the fictional threat of Russia. According to the Russian government this is due to U.S. pressure that will harm NATO members not only by causing regional tensions to rise, but also by ignoring real threats like terrorism.³³⁰ Other pieces of

³²⁶ “US Aircraft Carrier Enters Arctic Circle for the First Time in Nearly Three Decades,” RT, October 29, 2018, <https://www.rt.com/news/441829-us-aircraft-carrier-arctic/>.

³²⁷ Mikhail Khodarenok, “Battle for the Arctic: NATO’s Trident Juncture Aims to Demonstrate Its Dominance to Russia,” RT, October 18, 2018, <https://www.rt.com/op-ed/441627-arctic-nato-trident-russia/>.

³²⁸ “Disinfo: Finland Cooperates with NATO in Order to Get Territory in the Arctic,” EUvsDisinfo, East Stratcom Task Force, October 9, 2018, <https://euvsdisinfo.eu/report/finland-cooperates-with-nato-in-order-to-get-territory-in-the-arctic/>.

³²⁹ “NATO Drills Aggravate Military Situation in North Atlantic, Baltic Sea - Moscow,” Sputnik, October 25, 2018, <https://sputniknews.com/russia/201810251069220006-russia-eu-nato-trident-juncture-drills/>.

³³⁰ “Realities and Myths of NATO,” Embassy of the Russian Federation in Norway, April 22, 2019, https://norway.mid.ru/en/embassy/press-centre/news/realities_and_myths_of_nato/.

Russian propaganda from this time period use similar tactics to spread division such as by portraying Norway as surrendering its sovereignty to the U.S. and NATO and thus encouraging conflict in the region. Another piece posits that readiness issues of the German armed forces are really caused by a German government unnerved by NATO's aggressiveness towards Russia.³³¹ Yet, for all of the focus by Russian propaganda on NATO's aggressiveness and the grave threat the Alliance posed to peace in the region, there was also Russian propaganda that depicted NATO armed forces as ill-mannered (troops relieving themselves in public places), undisciplined (consuming all the alcohol in Iceland), and incompetent (crashing vehicles and sinking a Norwegian frigate).³³²

3. NATO Public Diplomacy Focusing on Trident Juncture 2018

Alliance public diplomacy concerning Trident Juncture 2018 focused on themes evident in other NATO information efforts such as NATO's purpose (collective defense) and NATO's values (pursuit of peace not aggression, adherence to international agreements, and transparency). NATO's efforts aimed to convey these themes to populations of NATO countries and partner states, but also to counter Russian propaganda.

Social media including Instagram and Twitter provided a means for NATO, Alliance members, and partner states to connect with the public and spread information regarding Trident Juncture. Numerous official Twitter accounts of NATO (@NATO, @NATOpres, etc.) and its personnel (@jensstoltenberg, @dylanpwhite, etc.) along with the official NATO Instagram account posted updates on Trident Juncture describing the participants, exercise areas, as well as highlighting contributions of individual nations.

³³¹ "Gigantic NATO Drill in Norway Spurs Fears of 'Record Speed' Cold War," Sputnik, October 25, 2018, <https://sputniknews.com/military/201810251069197200-norway-nato-drills-cold-war/>; "Disinfo: Trident Juncture: Norway's Obedience Puts an End to Country's Existence," EUvsDisinfo, East Stratcom Task Force, October 25, 2018, <https://euvsdisinfo.eu/report/trident-juncture-norways-obedience-puts-an-end-to-countrys-existence/>; "Germany Is Reluctant to Fight the War Against Russia with the Rest of NATO," News Front, November 5, 2018, <https://en.news-front.info/2018/11/05/germany-is-reluctant-to-fight-the-war-against-russia-with-the-rest-of-nato/>.

³³² "Pooing Troops, Empty Bars, Sinking Frigate and Other Takeaways from NATO Largest Drills," RT, November 10, 2018, <https://www.rt.com/news/443633-norway-nato-failures-drill/>; Embassy of the Russian Federation in Norway, "Realities and Myths of NATO."

Many of these stressed the themes of NATO's purpose, benefits, and values.³³³ The #WeAreNATO branding campaign played a prominent role with it being featured in dozens of posts on NATO's Instagram account. Social media was also used to directly confront Russian propaganda such as the example discussed in Chapter III Figure 30.

NATO used other means to counter Russian propaganda during Trident Juncture as well. A NATO webpage debunked Russian propaganda myths about the Alliance, and in response to the Russian claim that NATO military exercises target and threaten Russia, NATO reiterated that the Alliance is a defensive one. The text further pointed out NATO's transparency and adherence to international agreements.³³⁴ Another NATO webpage provided greater detail, explaining how NATO always complies with the OSCE's Vienna Document that requires advance notification to all OSCE members of military exercises involving over 9,000 personnel and observation by members of exercises with over 13,000 personnel.³³⁵

³³³ Jens Stoltenberg (@jensstoltenberg), "Good Luck to All the Men & Women Participating in #NATO Exercise #TridentJuncture, Starting in Norway Today. We Are Sending a Clear Message That NATO Stands Ready to Defend Our Nations & Preserve the Peace.," Twitter, October 25, 2018, 3:27 a.m., <https://twitter.com/jensstoltenberg/status/1055405441868546048>; Jens Stoltenberg (@jensstoltenberg), "#NATO's Mission Is to Preserve the Peace. That Is What Exercise #TridentJuncture Is All about.," Twitter, October 30, 2018, 5:09 a.m., <https://twitter.com/jensstoltenberg/status/1057243025993281537>; North Atlantic Treaty Organization (@NATO), "'Welcome to #Norway! Here's What You Need to Know: Norwegians Are Born with Skis on, and They Really Love Their Fish.," Twitter, October 30, 2018, 1:48 a.m., <https://twitter.com/nato/status/1057192450794631169>; North Atlantic Treaty Organization (@NATO), "Get Ready for #TridentJuncture 18! #NATO's Largest Exercise in Decades.," Twitter, October 25, 2018, 5:09 a.m., <https://twitter.com/nato/status/1055431049679986694>; Oana Lungescu (@NATOpres), "#NATO Exercise #TridentJuncture Isn't Directed against Any Country, It's a Message to All Potential Adversaries That We Have the Resolve to Defend Allies & so Prevent Attack.," Twitter, November 1, 2018, 7:21 a.m., <https://twitter.com/natopress/status/1058000962864979968>; Oana Lungescu (@NATOpres), "Exercise #TridentJuncture 18 Shows That #NATO Is Strong, as Well as Transparent. All Members of @OSCE Were Invited to Send Observers, and Many Including RU, Did.," Twitter, November 13, 2018, 1:53 a.m., <https://twitter.com/natopress/status/1062282353370951680>.

³³⁴ "NATO-Russia: Setting the Record Straight," NATO, August 5, 2019, <http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/115204.htm>.

³³⁵ "International Observers Visit Exercise Trident Juncture 2018," NATO, November 1, 2018, http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/news_160033.htm.

C. CONCLUSION

These two case studies show that since 2014 Russia has continued to disseminate anti-NATO propaganda and NATO has worked to counter it while making sure the Alliance's narrative is heard. In both cases Russian propaganda sought to portray NATO as the true danger to security and stability in the region. The Alliance smartly continued to convey to the public NATO's purpose, benefits, and values while also specifically refuting Russian propaganda and disinformation.

V. CONCLUSION

A. RUSSIA'S ANTI-NATO PROPAGANDA—THE OLD AND THE NEW

One of the two hypotheses presented in Chapter I posited that the anti-NATO propaganda efforts of Russia today are not a new phenomenon, but instead are a continuation of the USSR's mass persuasion activities targeted against the Alliance during the Cold War. The comparative approach used in Chapter II demonstrated that this is indeed the case though unsurprisingly there are a couple of noteworthy differences that need to be recognized.

Key similarities exist between the Russia's and the USSR's views on propaganda as well as in the goals and themes of anti-NATO mass persuasion efforts. Like in the Soviet Union, Russia today recognizes that propaganda is a valuable tool to spread its approved culture, ideology, and nationalism domestically thus assisting in the consolidation of power by Putin and his supporters. In the foreign sphere propaganda is seen as a way for Russia, like the Soviet Union, to rally international support and distract and divide adversaries thus allowing Russia to pursue and achieve its policy objectives. The goals and themes of anti-NATO propaganda remain quite the same. The objectives are to diminish NATO's power by sapping public support and dividing the Alliance members. Russia continues to use themes portraying NATO as aggressive, bellicose, and supporting fascism.

Major differences between Russian and Soviet anti-NATO mass persuasion activities are found in the ideology driving these regimes and the means available to disseminate the propaganda. Both are significant. The lack of a Communist ideology grants the Kremlin flexibility. For example, Russia can generate propaganda with the Kremlin's anti-NATO themes and pro-Russian ones that targets groups and individuals across the political spectrum. The advances in communications technology since the Cold War, particularly in the last decade, have played a major role in Russia's propaganda campaigns by allowing, on a continuous basis, the Kremlin to distort the truth and distract the conversation in an attempt to control the narrative and influence targeted populations.

B. NATO'S RESPONSE TO RUSSIA'S MASS PERSUASION CHALLENGE

The second hypothesis put forth in Chapter I stated that since 2014 the Alliance's public diplomacy activities have countered Russian anti-NATO propaganda and bolstered NATO. Investigating NATO's efforts sought to answer the research questions of how the Alliance has countered Russian mass persuasion activities and how NATO's actions in the public diplomacy realm have supported the Alliance. As acknowledged in Chapter I, it is extremely difficult to measure the effectiveness of a piece of propaganda or even a campaign. However, Chapter III and Chapter IV demonstrate that NATO's public diplomacy activities since 2014 have countered Russian anti-NATO propaganda while also bolstering the Alliance. The former chapter by its comparative nature provides the reader with a clear distinction between NATO's public diplomacy today and its information efforts of the Cold War. This distinction lies in NATO's countering of propaganda directed against the Alliance. The latter chapter provides two additional cases that show NATO confronting Russia mass persuasion while spreading pro-NATO messaging.

As evidenced in Chapters III and IV, NATO has countered Russian propaganda by confronting it. The Alliance has not relied on the national efforts of member states but has itself actively engaged. NATO has done so in a number of ways. It has catalogued Russian myths about the Alliance and publicly refuted them. NATO leadership through various means have highlighted anti-NATO propaganda, called out Russia for spreading this misinformation, and countered it with truthful information.

NATO's public diplomacy actions have bolstered the Alliance and supported NATO's strategy to deter Russia by promoting the Alliance to the public and also not allowing false Russian claims about NATO to go uncorrected. This is seen in examples throughout Chapters III and IV. The #WeAreNATO branding campaign has been a key part of informing the public about NATO and generating a positive impression of the Alliance. The social media aspect of this branding campaign when combined with exercises like Trident Juncture provide a critical opportunity for NATO to connect with the public in different NATO countries and partner states and to share NATO's narrative.

C. NATO PUBLIC DIPLOMACY GOING FORWARD

In order to maintain public support and stay relevant the Alliance must continue to engage effectively with the populations of NATO member and partner states while countering Russian anti-NATO propaganda. To do this NATO must continue to make public diplomacy a priority, cooperate in the information realm with others (member states, partner nations, NGOs, etc.), and, most importantly, ensure that NATO's purpose, values, and benefits are clearly conveyed.

Chapter III highlights the steps NATO has taken in the last decade to improve its public diplomacy. These were positive actions and NATO must continue to promote itself in order to ensure public awareness of the Alliance and prevent Russia from controlling the narrative. For example, social media provides NATO a means to engage the public while directly and in a timely manner (both key) confront and counter Russian anti-NATO propaganda. NATO must continue to measure and evaluate its public diplomacy efforts whether it is through polling, data analytics, or other methods in order to ensure that resources are devoted to activities that are producing results. As Maronkova writes "it is important to realize that the practice of public diplomacy and strategic communications is not static. It requires flexibility in searching for new and improved methods of evaluation and measurement. This flexibility is integral to the evolution of the outreach process."³³⁶

NATO cannot reach everyone and address all Russian propaganda by itself as the Alliance does not have the resources to do so. That is why cooperating with national information services of member states and other entities is vital. These third parties like the European External Action Service's East StratCom Task Force or the Atlantic Council's Digital Forensic Research can assist NATO such as by helping to identify, expose, and counter Russian propaganda and disinformation. The creation of NATO StratCom COE signified that NATO recognized the importance not only of strategic communications, but that cooperation in this arena, like in collective defense, is key. NATO must continue to be an active participant and facilitate the exchange of best

³³⁶ Maronkova, "From Crawling to Walking: Progress in Evaluating the Effectiveness of Public Diplomacy: Lessons Learned from NATO," 28.

practices and new ideas amongst its member states, partner nations, and likeminded private institutions.

Among many qualities, NATO stands for critical ones: security, democracy, freedom, and economic prosperity. These are powerful and appealing qualities. As noted in Chapter I, Paret argues that visual arts convey best the feelings and attitudes of the individuals and societies that created the art. Thus, NATO's messaging should reflect the values of the nations it defends and the Atlantic charter that established the Alliance. NATO should continue devoting resources to film, images, and other visual arts to tell interesting, unique, and engaging stories about the Alliance in order to connect people to their nation's contributions to NATO and thus link these people to the Alliance.

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